Monarchianism and Origen's Early Trinitarian Theology

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Monarchianism and Origen's Early Trinitarian Theology

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Contents

Abbreviations

ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
AP	Adversus Praxean (Tertullian)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum series latina
ComJn	Commentary on John (Origen)
ComMatt	Commentary on Matthew (Origen)
CN	Contra Noetum (Hippolytus)
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
De Prin.	De Principiis (Origen)
EH	Ecclesiastical History (Eusebius)
Exc.	Excerpta ex Theodoto (Clement)
FC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Paed.	Paedagogus (Clement)
Refutatio	Refutatio omnium haeresium
SC	Sources chretiennes
Strom.	Stromata (Clement)

Introduction

The opening books of Origen's *Commentary on John* (*ComJn*) are some of the most important for the study of his early theology.[1] Origen's commentary on the "spiritual Gospel" in these books is preserved in Greek that Rufinus has not emended. Within these two books that focus on the prologue to the Gospel of John, one particular passage stands out for the vivid way in which it discusses the relationship between the Father, Son, and the created order: *ComJn* 2.13–33. As I argue in the last two chapters of the book, the first two books of *ComJn* and especially this passage are an important touchstone for reconstructing Origen's early Trinitarian theology.[2]

Near the beginning of *ComJn* 2.13 ff., Origen informs his readers that he is attempting to resolve the problem of some God-loving, but misguided Christians.[3] There are some Christians, Origen observes, who are afraid that they could be understood to be proclaiming two gods. To avoid this misunderstanding, some of these Christians affirmed that the Son is divine but denied that he is distinct from the Father; others affirmed that the Son is distinct from the Father but denied the Son's divinity.[4] Origen does not identify the proponents of this theology by name or tell us much about their background. A

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1   I discuss the reasons for the importance of *ComJn* 1–2 in much greater detail at the beginning of chapter four. Briefly stated, however, it is important for the following reasons: (1) it survives in Greek; (2) the vast majority of Origen's theological writing occurs in biblical commentaries; (3) Origen thinks the Gospel of John has pride of place among the Gospels; (4) the Gospel of John was important for a number of divergent theological streams in the early third century, like Valentinianism. See Ronald Heine's discussion of *ComJn's* importance: Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 86–103.

2   My judgment about the importance of this passage is shared by other notable scholars. Jean Daniélou notes that "this passage expresses the very heart of Origen's vision of the Godhead." See his *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker, History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea 2 (London: Longman & Todd, 1973), 382. Henri Crouzel also observes the importance of this passage and notes that it has caused a good deal of controversy. See Henri Crouzel, *Origen*, trans. A.S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 181.

3   Origen, *ComJn* 2.16.

4   The two attempts to avoid proclaiming two gods here roughly line up with what I label "monarchianism" and "psilanthropism." The former dealt with the problem of proclaiming both that there is only one God and that the Son is divine by arguing that the Son is the same as the Father. The latter dealt with the problem by denying that the Son was divine. Although they answered the question differently, each position was concerned to protect the claim that there is only one God. As I make clear in my later discussion

survey of Christian writings roughly contemporary with the beginning of Origen's *ComJn* reveals that the theology Origen was attempting to correct was not an isolated phenomenon. In these writings, we encounter Christians who were so concerned to protect the uniqueness of God that they accused their opponents of proclaiming two gods or being ditheists.[5] In order to avoid what they viewed as ditheism, these theologians often professed that the Father and the Son are "one and the same," thus denying any distinction between them.[6] These theologians, attested outside of Origen's *ComJn*, propounded a theology that seems very similar to what Origen is dealing with in *ComJn* 2.16. Scholars refer to this theological position as monarchianism, among other titles.[7]

If Origen was addressing monarchian theology in *ComJn* 2.13 ff., then a proper historical understanding of Origen's argument requires knowledge of the state of monarchian theology at the beginning of the third century. Many scholarly accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology are inadequate because they are deficient in two respects. First, scholars frequently fail to read Origen as engaging with monarchianism.[8] Second, when scholars do include attention to Origen's engagement with monarchianism, they typically work with an anemic understanding of monarchianism as some vague, generic form of modalism, which itself functions as an ill-defined buzzword.[9] These two specific deficiencies are the result of a broader trend in scholarship on Origen's Trinitarian

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of monarchianism, it is often linked to psilanthropism—probably because they shared the concern to protect the uniqueness of God.

5   For the concern to avoid proclaiming two gods, see: Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1, 14.2–3; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.1; and *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.12.16. As I discuss in much detail later, questions about the authorship of the *Refutatio* are so debated that I treat it as an anonymous text.

6   For the explicit claim that the Father and Son are "one and the same," see: Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3; *Refutatio* 9.10.11–12. Again, I examine these texts very closely in the following chapters.

7   As I discuss below, there is no consensus among scholars about what to call this theological position. Other names used to denote the position are "patripassianism," "modalism," and "Sabellianism." Beyond the issue of what to call this theology, there is no universally agreed upon definition of what made up the core of this theology. Therefore, I continue to use the title "monarchian;" but I define it clearly so as to delineate the core of the theological position.

8   As I note later, some scholars note that Origen's polemic against modalism shaped his theology; but they do not elaborate on how it did. There are also a few notable exceptions to this trend, which I discuss later.

9   Such is the case with the recent work of Christoph Bruns. For him, monarchianism or modalism is the bugaboo Origen is attempting to avoid and refute; but Bruns provides no detail or texture about the position Origen is opposing. See Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos: Zur Gotteslehre des Origenes*, Adamantiana 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013).

theology. Many scholars are more concerned with the role of Origen's theology in the development of later Nicene and post-Nicene Trinitarian theologies than they are with how it functioned in its contemporary context. The unfortunate byproduct of this way of reading Origen is that scholars give his contemporary context—especially his engagement with monarchianism—too little attention.

The work of this book is to remedy both of the deficiencies in scholarly readings of Origen's Trinitarian theology. First, it provides a clear and detailed reconstruction of monarchianism as it had developed by the beginning of the third century. Second, it argues that Origen's engagement with monarchianism as he wrote the opening books of his *ComJn* shaped the way he articulated his Trinitarian theology. The first part of the book reconstructs the main contours of monarchian theology using primary sources written in the first half of the third century. Using this foundation, I then reread key passages from *ComJn* 1–2 where Origen engages with monarchian theology. Not only does the book focus on the fact that Origen was engaged with monarchians early in his career, but it also offers a clearer picture of what the monarchians taught than is common in scholarship. The result is a deep, contextual rereading of Origen's early Trinitarian theology as expressed in one small part of his expansive corpus.[10] It is not an attempt at a grand pan-oeuvre reconstruction of Origen's Trinitarian theology and, thus, does not attempt to address the question of development within Origen's thought.[11]

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10   This book is a long-form version of what Michel R. Barnes calls a "dense reading." Barnes has laid out the criteria that are needed to judge the credibility of a reading of any given historical text. See Michel R. Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 150–154. I will summarize the main points he makes instead of reproducing his seven criteria here. A "Barnesian dense reading" requires that a text be read with careful attention to its contemporary context. Attention to both the immediate context in which a text was produced and the antecedent tradition that shaped that context is necessary for a credible reading of the text. Barnes gives more detail about this methodology in the essay cited above, but the main point is that we best understand a text by reading it in its original context and with attention to the forces that shaped that context. In the case of this book, my reading of Origen required that I first reconstruct monarchianism. Had I not reconstructed this primary context for the key passage from *ComJn* 2.13ff., my reading of Origen would have lacked credibility.

11   Such an ambitious project will be able to build on of the work I do here. My hope is that dense and textured accounts such as the one I give will enable more nuanced portraits of Origen's Trinitarian theology as a whole and over the whole course of his career.

1   **Monarchianism**

Questions about monotheism and the position of Jesus in relation to the one God remained active and disputed well into the third century of the Common Era.[12] These questions were raised with exceptional intensity in the so-called monarchian controversy, which erupted in Rome at the beginning of the third century. Despite and because of the strident opposition to monarchianism that arose in the early third century, it is difficult to develop a clear account of monarchian theology. The reconstruction of the main contours of monarchian theology is the focus of the first part of this book.

Monarchian theology is difficult to reconstruct for two main reasons. The first is that we possess no texts from the monarchians themselves. Whereas the study of the varieties of Gnosticism has been aided by the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, scholars have not been so fortunate as to discover a cache of monarchian primary sources. The second difficulty arises from the fact that any portrait of monarchian theology at the beginning of the third century must be built upon four main texts, all of which are hostile witnesses to monarchianism.[13] Their hostility to monarchianism means that their accounts can be tendentious and offer polemical caricatures.[14]

The four main texts that attest to monarchianism are Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (often attributed to Hippolytus), and Novatian's *De Trinitate*. There is general agreement among scholars about the authorship and dating of *Adversus Praxean* and *De Trinitate*, but the same cannot be said of *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio*.[15] These texts were produced during the first half of the third century, and

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12   See, among others, the work of Larry Hurtado, who has traced the question of the divinity of Jesus and monotheism well into the second century. Larry W. Hurtado, *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, 2nd ed (London: T&T Clark, 1998); idem, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2003).

13   By hostile witnesses, I mean that each of these texts seeks to refute monarchian positions. Because of their anti-monarchian orientation, these texts are often prone to distort the positions of those whom they oppose. As I discuss later, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* can be of some use for reconstructing the situation of the church at Rome during the time the monarchian controversy broke out; but he is oddly silent on the details of the controversy itself.

14   This is especially the case with the *Refutatio*, whose well-known polemical distortions I discuss in more length in a later chapter.

15   I discuss the many issues surrounding these texts and questions about the identity of Hippolytus in the later chapters. For the time being, suffice it to say that there is little schol-

they offer different views of monarchianism.[16] The first part of the book uses these four texts to build a picture of monarchian theology. My primary interest in these texts is not what they can tell us about the theology of their authors; it is what they can tell us about the theology of their opponents, the monarchians. Specifically, I am interested in establishing the monarchians' core theological commitments and the theological themes to which they give the most attention. Furthermore, my account of monarchianism focuses on which biblical texts they used and how they exegeted scripture; for in the minds of the disputants, the debate was fundamentally about the proper interpretation of scripture.[17]

2   Major Scholarship on Monarchianism

Such a detailed account of monarchian theology is necessary because it has been neglected in much recent scholarship. Furthermore, most of the serious treatments of monarchianism have focused on something other than a reconstruction of the core of monarchian theology and exegesis. A brief survey of the major accounts of monarchianism will help demonstrate the need for my work.[18] Following Hagemann's seminal study of the church in

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arly agreement about the authorship, dating, and geographical provenance of these texts. Most scholars think the *Refutatio* was produced in Rome or the surrounding regions, but they are divided about the geographical provenance of *Contra Noetum*. As I detail later, most think it is either from Rome or somewhere in Asia Minor.

16   By suggesting that these texts were produced in the first half of the third century, I am rejecting the claims of Josef Frickel's later work, where he argues that *Contra Noetum*, at least in its final form, is a product of the fourth century at the earliest. See Josef Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift Contra Noetum: ein Pseudo-Hippolyt," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski*, ed. Hans Christof Brennecke, Ernst Ludwig Grasmück, and Christoph Markschies, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 67 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993), 87–123. In addition, as I note in later chapters, most scholars think there is some sort of dependence between *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*.

17   Note especially Hippolytus' repeated remarks about Monarchian misuse of scripture in *Contra Noetum*. He accuses the Noetians of interpreting individual verses outside of the context of whole passages (3.1). He complains that they "hack the scriptures to pieces" (περικόπτουσι τὰς γραφάς) (4.2). Later in the work, he implies that the Noetian exegesis is the result of a misuse of προαίρεσις (9.3). See also Mark DelCogliano's article on anti-Monarchian exegetical strategies: Mark DelCogliano, "The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–138.

18   My account here is highly selective. I am only discussing the most substantial and influential treatments of monarchianism, especially those that address monarchianism as their main topic.

Rome,[19] Harnack produced a number of accounts of monarchianism that shaped discourse for much of the twentieth century.[20] Harnack's division of monarchianism into two main streams, modalistic and dynamistic, has become a scholarly commonplace.[21] Harnack's account is colored by his overarching assumption that the speculative theology of the learned *Logos* theologians was at odds with the simple faith of the uneducated masses.[22] He proposed that it was this opposition between the learned theologians and the simple laity that gave rise to the monarchian controversy and that monarchianism was an attempt to protect the pure faith against the intrusion of speculation which derived from Hellenistic philosophy.[23]

Harnack's theory about the divide between the scholars and the laity quickly found a proponent in the work of Jules Lebreton, who produced a series of essays that were influential for years to come.[24] His essays in turn influenced

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19   Hermann Hagemann, *Die römische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1864). Note also La Piana's oft-cited article on the Church in Rome in the late second century: George La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century: The Episcopate of Victor, the Latinization of the Roman Church, the Easter Controversy, Consolidation of Power and Doctrinal Development, the Catacomb of Callistus," *Harvard Theological Review* 18, no. 3 (1925): 201–277.

20   Harnack's most comprehensive treatment is found in Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Mohr, 1886), 556–662. I will quote from and cite the following English translation: Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 1–118. Note also Harnack's influential encyclopedia entry: "Monarchianismus," in *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, ed. J.J. Herzog and Albert Hauck, 3rd ed., vol. 13, 24 vols. (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1903), 303–336. An abridged English translation of this article can be found in "Monarchianism," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore, 13 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1963), 7:453–461.

21   See, for example, Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3:13; Harnack, "Monarchianism," 454. Although the referents of Harnack's terms are fairly clear, I later propose a more restrictive definition of monarchianism that aims to highlight their central concern. I will discuss the difficulties that accompany naming the controversy shortly.

22   He gives this position at length at the beginning of the third volume of his *History of Dogma*.

23   There are a whole host of factors that influenced his thinking in this regard, but they are beyond the scope of this current book. For an exploration of some of the motivations behind Harnack's thought, see Claudia Rapp, "Adolf Harnack and the Paleontological Layer of Church History," in *Ascetic Culture: Essays in Honor of Philip Rousseau*, ed. Blake Leyerle and Robin Darling Young (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 295–314.

24   Jules Lebreton, "Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l' Église chrétienne du IIIe siècle (à suivre)," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 19, no. 4 (1923): 481–506; "Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l' Église chrétienne du

the authors of major encyclopedia entries on monarchianism during the first half of the twentieth century.[25] In the middle of the twentieth century, Ernest Evans gave a condensed account of the monarchian controversy in the introduction to his translation of *Adversus Praxean*.[26] His is a good general overview, although its brevity still leaves a need for a fuller account.

In the 1980s, Michael Decker completed a dissertation on monarchianism.[27] One of the chief goals of the dissertation was a source-critical study of monarchianism. From this source-critical study, he concludes that nearly all of the biblical exegesis attributed to the Noetians in *Contra Noetum* is the polemical invention of Hippolytus; he does not think that Noetian theology relied heavily on biblical exegesis.[28] Throughout the course of his dissertation, Decker casts the monarchian controversy as a clash between different theological systems developed in Asia Minor and Rome.[29] Despite its novel approach to the monarchian controversy, Decker's work still does not leave us with a coherent picture of the core of monarchian thought.[30]

IIIe siècle (suite et fin)," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 20, no. 1 (1924): 5–37. These essays have since been criticized. See Marguerite Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du verbe incarné*, Patristica Sorbonensia 2 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958), 46. She writes, "Ces deux articles sont typiques d'une conception encore fort répandue dans les dictionnaires et encyclopédies, mais qui semble dépassée." See also a similar thesis to that of Lebreton advanced in the 1960s: Harry James Carpenter, "Popular Christianity and the Theologians in the Early Centuries," *Journal of Theological Studies* 14, no. 2 (1963): 294–310.

25   Gustave Bardy, "Monarchianisme," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, contenant l'exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire*, ed. Alfred Vacant, E. Mangenot, and Emile Amann, 15 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1929), 10.2:2193–2209; Henri Leclercq, "Monarchianisme," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, 15 vols. (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1934), 11.2:1947–1964. The structure, content, and wording of these two articles is strikingly similar. Leclercq seems to have been almost solely reliant on the prior work of Bardy, to the point that his own work lacks much original material.

26   Tertullian, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: s.p.c.k., 1948), 6–18.

27   Michael Decker, "Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987). This dissertation is rarely cited in English language scholarship, and I first discovered it in Uríbarri Bilbao's book.

28   See, for example, Ibid., 156–157. As I note in my chapter on *Contra Noetum* and my conclusions about Monarchianism, I find Decker's conclusion problematic. Biblical exegesis was deeply interwoven into the thought of the Noetians and all of the other monarchians. If Hippolytus invented this Noetian exegesis, he is a skillful literary craftsman indeed.

29   He articulates this point very strongly on pp. 200–205. I also have some serious objections to his presentation of the monarchian controversy as a conflict between Eastern and Western theologies, but I deal with that at more length later.

30   By "core of monarchian theology" I mean those theological elements that recur in the four

Shortly after Decker's work, two scholars produced major studies of monar-
chianism. Starting in the late 1980s, Reinhard Hübner developed a series of
arguments that radically reinterpreted a number of the primary texts related
to monarchianism.[31] One of Hübner's main contentions is that monarchiansim
arose as a reaction against Gnosticism and that it appeared early in the second
century.[32] Perhaps the most idiosyncratic feature of Hübner's arguments is that
he reasons that Noetus was active early in the second century and that figures
like Ignatius and Melito were reliant on his theology.[33] His argument calls for a
highly revisionist chronology that is not justified by the evidence. Like the treat-
ments of monarchianism before him, Hübner's fails to produce a clear account
of the core of monarchian teaching.

The latest major treatment of monarchianism is Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao's
tome written in the mid-1990s.[34] Bilbao's main concern is to trace the use of
the term μοναρχία in order to determine how it relates to Trinity. Specifically,
he wants to know whether the term μοναρχία necessarily excludes a Trinitarian

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major texts that I study. As I note numerous times throughout the book, I think the core of
monarchianism entailed two commitments and one accompanying conclusion: (1) There
is one God (the Father); (2) Jesus is God; therefore, Jesus and the Father are one and the
same. The beginning of *Contra Noetum* presents a very condensed account of monarchian
teaching and its exegetical underpinnings.

31   Hübner's essays, which were published in various venues, were gathered into a collected
volume in 1999. For the sake of ease, I will cite them as they appear in that volume.
See Reinhard M. Hübner, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten
Jahrhundert* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999). Note also Mark Edwards' somewhat critical
review of the volume: M.J. Edwards, "Review of Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monar-
chianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert," *Journal of Theological Studies* 52, no. 1 (2001): 354–
356.

32   See in particular two of his essays within the collected volume: "Die antignostische Glau-
bensregel des Noët von Smyrna," (39–94); and "Der antivalentinianische Charakter der
Theologie des Noët von Smyrna," (95–129). As I have argued in Stephen Waers, "Isaiah 44–
45 and Competing Conceptions of Monotheism in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries," in *Studia
Patristica*, vol. 91 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 11–18, I think Hübner's broad thesis is correct.
Anti-Gnostic polemics probably played some role in the formation of monarchian theol-
ogy. However, I disagree on many of the particular details of his argument, especially his
revisionist chronology.

33   Most think Ignatius wrote somewhere between 105 and 115 C.E. Melito probably wrote dur-
ing the 160s. From the scarce data available, scholars typically place Noetus at the end of
the second century.

34   Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la
controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid,
Serie 1: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996). See also his earlier exploration of the ques-
tion: "Monarquía: Apuntes sobre el estado de la cuestión," *Estudios eclesiásticos* 69, no. 270
(1994): 343–366.

understanding of God. To answer this question, he begins by tracing the early philosophical roots of the term and follows its usage well into third-century Christian texts. At the end, Bilbao concludes that μοναρχία is not necessarily opposed to a Trinitarian understanding of God. Because of this conclusion, he judges Praxeas' alleged anti-Trinitarian use of the term to be a bastardization of its normal use.[35] Although Bilbao's book is a careful and nuanced study of the use and history of the term μοναρχία, he does not seek to offer a comprehensive account of monarchian theology. Indeed, as Bilbao reminds his readers on multiple occasions, the term μοναρχία itself was not at the heart of the monarchian position. His compelling argument that the term μοναρχία was not at odds with Trinitarian theology still leaves need for the careful reconstruction I undertake.

None of the major works on monarchianism provides a nuanced reconstruction of their core theological positions by using the full array of extant sources.[36] This is precisely the gap in scholarship that I aim to fill in part one of this book. Monarchianism did not arise out of nowhere. Although the extant witnesses we have for it are laconic with regard to its theological origins, I first offer a hypothesis about what theological developments in the second century might have prompted its rise. After giving a hypothesis about the theological origins of monarchianism, I seek to establish a stable core of monarchian theology through a careful examination of the four primary sources I listed above. I describe their theology by focusing on major themes that recur throughout the different texts, such as the visibility of God, the explicit identification of the Father and Son, and the suffering of the Father, among others. By focusing on these major themes, I am able to identify both a stable core of monarchian theology (the things that remain constant over the time period of the texts that I study) and the elements of monarchian theology that underwent development, perhaps in response to the growing criticism from anti-monarchian writers. In addition, I highlight their exegetical tendencies and popular biblical texts that might have belonged to some sort of monarchian dossier of proof texts.

There is one more problem I must attend to in this introduction: what to call the monarchian controversy. Scholars have long noted that settling on a name for the phenomenon often referred to as the monarchian controversy

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35   See Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 226. There, he writes, "Praxeas' way of understanding the monarchy is an isolated and exceptional case within the Christian literature that has been handed down to us" (La manera de entender la monarquía de Praxeas es un caso aislado y excepcional dentro de la literatura Cristiana que se nos ha transmitido).

36   There are, however, some excellent and nuanced studies of Monarchianism that focus on a smaller issue. See, for example, Ronald Heine's excellent study, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91.

is difficult. In antiquity, the proponents of this theology were variously called "monarchians," "Sabellians," and "patripassians."[37] Each of these names for the theological position is objectionable for different reasons. In the first place, not all of the so-called "monarchians" gave the term μοναρχία a central place in their theology.[38] The use of the title "Sabellian" for the theology I am considering is also problematic. One of the primary reasons such a title is problematic is that we know almost nothing about the theology of Sabellius. As I note in an excursus in my discussion of Novatian, we have almost no specific details about Sabellius' theology from contemporary sources; and the later heresiologists mistakenly attribute later teaching to him. Calling this theology "Sabellianism" obscures the fact that these theological positions antedated Sabellius, about whom we know very little.[39] Finally, to call this theology "patripassianism" veils the central concern of these theologians. As Ronald Heine notes, the claim that the Father suffered was built on the more fundamental, exegetically-based claims that the Father and Son were identical.[40] Even more, as becomes evident in my later discussions, although the commitment to the identity of Father and Son remained unwavering, judgments about the patripassian implications of this fundamental stance varied as the theology developed.[41]

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37   Contemporary scholars also call them "modalists;" and while this term can be helpful, it does not easily map onto any of the key terms used in the primary texts. I avoid using it for this reason, although I do not find it completely unhelpful.

38   This is one of the central contentions of Bilbao. See Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 226, 279. Instead of "monarchians," Bilbao prefers to call them "patripassians" or "Sabellians." But these designations have their own sets of problems. See especially his discussion of the naming: Ibid., 497–500. Note also Simonetti's critical response to some of Bilbao's conclusions about the use of the term μοναρχία: Manlio Simonetti, "Monarchia e Trinità: Alcune osservazioni su un libro recente," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33, no. 3 (1997): 627–628.

39   For discussions of the difficulties surrounding Sabellius, see Reinhard M. Hübner, "Die Hauptquelle des Epiphanius (Panarion, haer 65) über Paulus von Samosata: Ps-Athanasius, Contra Sabellianos," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 90, no. 2–3 (1979): 201–220; Joseph T. Lienhard, "Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and 'Sabellius,'" *Church History* 58, no. 2 (1989): 157–167; M. Simonetti, "Sulla recente fortuna del 'Contra Sabellianos' ps. atanasiano," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 26, no. 1 (1990): 117–132; Wolfgang A. Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993), 124–139; idem, "Wer war Sabellius?," *Studia patristica* 40 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 359–365.

40   He writes, "The monarchian thesis, in which the Noetians included Christ, is derived from their reading of Scripture, but the patripassianist thesis is supported solely by logic based on the monarchian thesis." Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 83.

41   Of note here are the sections in *Adversus Praxean* and the *Refutatio* where monarchian theologians seem to shy away from affirming that the Father suffered. I discuss these pas-

Although there are problems with each of the main terms used to describe the theology I am studying, I have chosen to refer to it as "monarchianism" in this book.[42] As is clear at the end of my examination of the primary texts in the first part of the book, the monarchians had two core commitments: (1) God is one alone; (2) Jesus is God. These two core commitments led them to conclude that the Father and the Son are "one and the same" (ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ).[43] This is the heart of the theological position I am calling monarchianism. Thus, those whom I call monarchians are the same as those called "modalistic monarchians" in Harnack's popular phraseology.[44] By confining my definition of "monarchianism" to those who hold (1) and (2) above, as well as the concomitant identification of Father and Son, I am able to identify the core of the theology while still allowing for more precise descriptions of the diversity and development within it.

My research into monarchianism constitutes part one of the book and presents a clearer picture of the monarchian theological commitments than has yet been produced. The spate of anti-monarchian works produced at the beginning of the third century shows that some prominent theologians viewed it as a major threat. With my reconstruction of monarchian theology in place, we will be better able to understand why some viewed it as such a threat.[45] Furthermore, this reconstruction of their theology allows us to understand the role they played in the development of Trinitarian theology in the early third century. Part two of this book is a modest attempt to begin revisiting the development of Trinitarian theology at the beginning of the third century with fuller attention given to the anti-monarchian context.

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sages in later sections on the suffering of the Father in the chapters on *Adversus Praxean* and the *Refutatio*.

42   I do this fully conscious of Bilbao's valid critique and observation that the term itself is not necessarily opposed to Trinitarian understandings of God. I think the problems with the other terms, such as "Sabellianism" and "patripassianism" outweigh Bilbao's point about the use of μοναρχία.

43   See *Refutatio* 9.10.11–12 for this claim. See also the same claim in *Adversus Praxean* 2.3.

44   In the later chapters, I discuss the differences and similarities between Harnack's "dynamistic Monarchians," whom I prefer to call "psilanthropists," and his "modalistic monarchians." Although they share a similar concern to protect the oneness of God, they differ dramatically on the question of Jesus' divinity.

45   A fulsome reconstruction of monarchian theology will allow us to move beyond such outdated assumptions as those that underwrote the work of Harnack and Lebreton, for example.

3   Origen

Origen is a battlefield on which scholars anachronistically fight about pro- and
anti-Nicene trajectories, all laying claim to his "true" thought.[46] The vast impact
of his thought in the fourth century and beyond is undeniable, but the preoc-
cupation with determining who got Origen "right" often distorts our vision of
his thought.[47] Origen is more than the *Nachleben* of his theology in the fourth
century. Instead of reading Origen *in situ*, scholars often read Origen with one
eye toward Nicaea, looking for anticipation, development, and consonance in
every phrase.[48] They depict an Origen always coursing through time toward

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[46]   The legacy of Origen was already controverted less than one hundred years after his
death. His theology was appropriated and adapted to support varied, and sometimes
opposed, theologies. See, for example, two clear treatments of the appropriation of Origen
in the fourth-century doctrinal conflicts: Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach
to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20–30;
Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, rev. ed (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans,
2002), 117–157. Consider also R.P.C. Hanson's deliberation about the relationship between
Origen's theology and Arius: *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Contro-
versy, 318–381* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 60–70. For a more recent account in which
Origen plays a foundational role, see Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity
and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). Beeley is more
concerned with Christological issues than with Nicaea, but his whole project hinges on
his reading of Origen, "the great master." The conflict over the legacy of Origen has con-
tinued to unfold throughout Christian history. Writing in the thirteenth century, Thomas
Aquinas could echo the sentiment of earlier heresiologists that Origen was the source of
Arius' heresy: *Super Boetium de Trinitate*, 11, Q. 3, A. 4.

[47]   Our readings of Origen are shaped as much by later appropriations of him as they are by
his contemporary context.

[48]   A prime example is the continuous debate about whether Origen used the term *homoou-
sios*. The most important attestation of the term in Origen's corpus comes from a frag-
ment of Origen's *Commentary on Hebrews* in Rufinus' Latin translation of Pamphilius'
Apology for Origen. Despite such scant evidence that Origen actually used this term, schol-
ars devote substantial attention to the question of whether Origen could have used it.
This focus, I contend, is the product of reading Nicaea back onto Origen. The reason-
ing runs something like this: 1) Origen's theology was important in the Nicene debates;
2) *homoousios* was a key term in the Nicene debates; 3) therefore, we must determine how
(or if) Origen used this important term. Scholars pursue the question even though the
preponderance of evidence suggests that Origen did not use the term; or, that if he did,
it was not a major part of this theology. With the caveat that I think the question itself is
anachronistic, I am inclined to agree with Hanson, Williams, and Ayres that Origen prob-
ably did not use the term. See R.P.C. Hanson, "Did Origen Apply the Word Homoousios to
the Son?," in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques
Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 293–303; Williams, *Arius*,
131–137; Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 24. For a scholar who argues in the affirmative,

Nicaea and its aftermath.[49] Origen, it seems, is always on a train barreling forward in time that scholars often fail to examine before it leaves the station of his own context, his own time in the first half of the third century.

This tendency to project Origen toward Nicaea is easily recognizable in some major contemporary narratives about Nicene and post-Nicene Trinitarian theology and Christology.[50] This debate has, for some time, revolved around the question of whether Origen was a "subordinationist."[51] The bulk of scholars in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have had no doubt that Origen's Trinitarian theology was a prime example of subordinationism.[52] Some of these

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see M.J. Edwards, "Did Origen Apply the Word Homoousios to the Son," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 658–670. See also Ramelli's more recent claims that Origen used *homoousios*: Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 1 (2011): 31–32. Note also Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène*, Théologie, Études publiées sous la direction de la facultéde théologie S.J. de Lyon-Fourvière 34 (Paris: Aubier, 1956), 99–100.

49   Geoffrey Dunn observes this tendency in scholarship, even if he cannot completely extricate himself from it: "The hermeneutical principle that texts and theological history are to be understood in their own contexts and not in the light of later developments is an important one to repeat. Words like orthodoxy and heresy are often not helpful when considering the development of doctrine because they condition us to project backwards thoughts, expressions, positions, and outcomes which were not in place at the time." Geoffrey D. Dunn, "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 78, no. 4 (2002): 387.

50   See especially in this regard Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*. Beeley's reading of Origen forms the substrate on which the rest of his argument is built. This trend is even evident in the title of one of Ramelli's essays on Origen: Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line." My point here is that the trend for reading Origen is "Origen and X Nicene or post-Nicene figure or concept" rather than "Origen and X antecedent or contemporary problem."

51   Lewis Ayres discusses the difficulty that accompanies the use of the term "subordinationism." He notes that its application to pre-Nicene figures often "directs our attention away from the concern to emphasize continuity of being between the [Father and Son]." Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 21. Ayres himself prefers to use the term to describe theologies "whose clear intent is to subordinate the Son to the Father in opposition to the gradual emergence of Nicene and pro-Nicene theologies" (Ibid.). Ayres' corrective here is useful, but I will continue to use the term in my description of pre-Nicene theologians. My continued usage is partially motivated by the fact that the term is so embedded in debates about pre-Nicene theology that it is difficult to proceed without using it. The primary reason for my continued usage, however, is that I intend to recontextualize the term when it is applied to pre-Nicene theologians. As I argue in my last chapter, the subordination of the Son to the Father was a common strategy for distinguishing the Father and Son. Far from being a rejection of emerging fourth-century orthodoxy, it was an intentionally employed polemical strategy in the anti-monarchian milieu. With these caveats in place, I will no longer use quotation marks around subordination language.

52   Good examples of this position include the following: Harnack, *History of Dogma*; Eugène

scholars, like Lebreton,[53] lack nuance in their discussion of Origen's so-called subordination, while others, like Jean Daniélou, have very detailed accounts that nonetheless employ the language of subordination with its negative connotations.[54] Within the past 20 years, however, a handful of scholars have argued that Origen was actually an anti-subordinationist and that the old scholarly consensus was misguided. There were a few scholars in the twentieth century, notably Crouzel and Kannengiesser, who championed this position prior to its recent resurgence.[55] The scholars who have recently argued against Origen's alleged subordinationism have insisted that he taught the equality of the Father and the Son.[56]

de Faye, *Origen and His Work* (Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1978); Jules Lebreton, *The History of the Primitive Church* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1949). Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955); T.E. Pollard, "Logos and Son in Origen, Arius and Athanasius," *Studia Patristica* 2 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957), 282–287; Williamina M. Macaulay, "Nature of Christ in Origen's Commentary on John," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 19, no. 2 (1966): 176–187; J. Nigel Rowe, "Origen's Subordinationism as Illustrated in His Commentary on St John's Gospel," *Studia Patristica* 11.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1972), 222–228; J. Nigel Rowe, *Origen's Doctrine of Subordination: A Study in Origen's Christology*, vol. 272, European University Studies. Series XXIII (Berne; New York: P. Lang, 1987); A.H.B. Logan, "Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology," in *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies, University of Manchester, September 7th–11th, 1981*, ed. Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), 123–129.

53   Lebreton, *The History of the Primitive Church*, 940–941. Note especially his uncritical insertion of the notion of consubstantiality. He states, "The vital truth that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit transcend all other beings was always affirmed by Origen, and we find it already in the treatise *De Principiis*. But we must allow that there is in this treatise a hierarchical conception of the divine persons which endangers their equality and their consubstantiality. This idea appears in the treatise *De Principiis*, in spite of all the corrections made by Rufinus; it is also very marked in the *Commentary on St. John*; it will dominate the whole theological work of Origen, and he will even regard it as the rule governing Christian worship."

54   See especially his discussion of Origen's Christology: Daniélou, *Origen*, 251–275. There, he gives a very nuanced account of Origen's Christology before noting that "it is obviously tainted with subordinationism" (255).

55   Crouzel, *Origen*, 181–191; Charles Kannengiesser, "Christology," in *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. John Anthony McGuckin, 1st ed, The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 73–78.

56   Christopher Beeley writes, "Although he has been accused for centuries of subordinationism (or making Christ to be less divine than God the Father), Origen asserted the divinity of Christ in stronger terms than any Christian theologian to date …. Origen argues that Christ is equal to God the Father in both divinity and eternity" (Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 17–18). See also Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 302–350; Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line."

Christoph Bruns' recent consideration of Origen's Trinitarian theology is preoccupied with the question of subordination in Origen's Trinitarian theology.[57] Bruns sets out to determine if Origen was, in fact, a subordinationist. If the question is answered in the affirmative, Bruns wishes further to determine if Origen's subordinationism was ontological or relational/functional (which is to say, "economic").[58] Bruns' treatment spans Origen's entire corpus, although it is heavily weighted toward the *Commentary on John* and *De principiis*. Bruns acknowledges that adoptianism and modalism are two of the primary opposing positions against which Origen's Trinitarian theology was formed.[59] Beyond this assertion at the beginning of the book, however, neither adoptianism nor modalism plays a significant role, even as Bruns asserts repeatedly that Origen's *Hypostasenkonzeption* was largely formed in his anti-modalist polemic.[60]

As is clear throughout my discussion of Origen, I disagree with the claims of both Beeley and Ramelli. The last chapter demonstrates the grounds from which I reject Beeley's assertion that "Origen argues that Christ is equal to God the Father in both divinity and eternity." My disagreement is not with Beeley's claim about the eternity of Christ; it is with his claims about the equal divinity.

57   Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*. Bruns notes that his book, which is a revised version of his dissertation, fills a lacuna in Origen scholarship—namely, the lack of a protracted study of his Trinitarian theology (14). Bruns is right to note that the lack of protracted treatment of Origen's Trinitarian theology is a major lacuna in scholarship. Edwards suggested in his review, however, that Bruns' book might not have completely succeeded in filling the lacuna. See M.J. Edwards, "Review of Trinität und Kosmos," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 66, no. 2 (2015): 390–391.

58   See especially his discussions of the distinction in types of subordination (22–23). Bruns' distinction between these two types of subordinationism is strained—especially in his discussion of the ontological status of Holy Spirit in chapter three. In this chapter, the majority of the passages do not map cleanly onto his distinction. Origen addresses the question of the relationship of the Spirit to the Son and Father in the context of the Spirit's work of sanctification among humans. Thus, it is clear that ontology and economy are often of a piece for Origen. It seems as though Bruns introduces this distinction in order to affirm that passages in Origen are subordinationist while protecting him from what he considers the more damning charge of ontological subordination. Bruns himself acknowledges that his construct is not necessarily found in Origen's work itself (39).

59   Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 21.

60   See, for example, Ibid., 138. Bruns also notes that "Origen is clearly anxious to delineate the independence of the three hypostases against contemporary modalism" (87). Bruns scarcely treats the origins of modalism or the contemporary forms of its expression. In his narrative, it seems to be little more than a vague overemphasis on the unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit. He does, however, offer one interpretation of modalism: "[modalism], according to which the unity of God is guaranteed by the existence of a single divine hypostasis and Father and Son are only two different aspects or forms of expression of this one and only hypostasis" (102). Bruns' laconic definition is made without reference to any of the attestations to modalism (or monarchianism) at the beginning of the third cen-

He mentions modalism repeatedly, but it remains a vague bugaboo in the background of his reconstruction of Origen's thought.

From the outset of the work, it is clear that Bruns is considering Origen within the horizon of the development of Nicene-Constantinopolitan Trinitarian theology.[61] Bruns pauses at regular intervals throughout the book to consider if Origen's thought can align with pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology.[62] He often asserts that elements of Origen's thought align cleanly with later Nicene thought.[63] More frequently, however, Bruns argues that there is an unavoidable ambiguity in Origen's Trinitarian theology, that at times it appears to be subordinationist (whether ontological or economic, in his construct).[64] Such judgments about the ambiguity of Origen's theology express as much about Bruns' reticence to label Origen an outright subordinationist as they do about Origen's theology itself.[65] In the end, Bruns gives us a picture of an Origen whose Trinitarian theology was ambiguous but was, nevertheless, the seedbed from which grew multiple streams of fourth-century Trinitarian theology. Although such a view conveys some truth, his focus on Origen's relationship to later Nicene and post-Nicene theology often precludes a robust reconstruction of Origen's contemporary context, specifically his interaction with monarchianism. This tendency is especially evident when Bruns considers Origen's interpretation of John 14:28 ("the Father is greater than I") with reference to the exegesis of Athanasius, Hilary, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and John Chrysostom instead of giving due weight to Origen's contemporaries or predecessors.[66] Bruns' project

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tury. For example, one could easily press Bruns to identify what form of modalism used *hypostasis*, a somewhat technical term that does not seem to have been used in the earliest stages of monarchianism. Heine also observes that Bruns has scarcely defined modalism or considered its full significance: Ronald E. Heine, "Review: Christoph Bruns, Trinität und Kosmos," *Augustinian Studies* 45, no. 2 (2014): 306.

61   Bruns signals this horizon in the introduction, when he writes, "So with good reason is Origen referred to as the progenitor of the Nicene faith … which has been strongly reaffirmed by Illaria Ramelli" (Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 19).

62   See, for example, Ibid., 76–78, 88, 104–105, 304.

63   Thus he can write, "In the Trinitarian theology of Origen the Trinitarian faith of the church first assumed clear contours, with it as the breeding ground from which Trinitarian dogma could grow" (Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 20).

64   See, especially, Ibid., 21–23, 25, 51, 75, 88, 108–109, 112–113.

65   I am not here suggesting that there is no ambiguity in Origen's thought; there is plenty. A good bit of it, perhaps, stems from the difficulties in determining what parts of Origen's Trinitarian theology Rufinus has corrected in translation.

66   Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 76. Bruns only briefly mentions Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, and Clement of Alexandria in a footnote.

is ambitious; but unfortunately, it does not situate Origen adequately within his contemporary and antecedent theological and polemical contexts.

4   Subordinationism

Although terms denoting subordination have frequently driven the narrations of Origen's Trinitarian theology, scholars seldom take the time to actually define what they mean by subordination.[67] R.P.C. Hanson affirms that virtually every theologian, excepting Athanasius, held some form of subordinationism before the *dénouement* of the Arian controversy sometime after 355.[68] He suggests that some type of subordination would have been accepted as orthodox Trinitarian theology in the pre-Nicene era; but, like many others, he does not produce a clear definition of what constitutes subordinationism.

Given the current scholarly context, it is difficult to write about Origen's Trinitarian theology without addressing whether he was a subordinationist. As was the case for most of the twentieth century, such is still the question *du jour* when it comes to Origen's Trinitarian theology. In my final chapter, I explore

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67   Beeley is one of the few who defines the term. His two definitions of subordinationism or subordinationists are (1) "making Christ to be less divine than God the Father," and (2) "those who deny the full divinity of Christ" (Beeley, *The Unity of Christ*, 10, 17–18). Another notable exception to this ill-defined use of the term is the work of Wolfgang Marcus, which has received less attention than it is due: Wolfgang Marcus, *Der Subordinatianismus als historiologisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zu unserer Kenntnis von der Entstehung der altchristlichen "Theologie" und Kultur unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Begriffe Oikonomia und Theologia* (München: M. Hueber, 1963). Marcus surveys what he deems "liberal" and "conservative" scholarly explanations of subordinationism and notes that both view it as erroneous and locate the source of the error in the influence of Hellenism (27). Marcus views the focus on the role of subordinationism as overplayed. Instead, he looks for the scriptural warrant for subordinationism and any precedents in Judaism (48). One of Marcus' main goals is to normalize pre-Nicene subordinationism, to argue that it was not deviant. He thinks subordinationism is better understood as an intermediate position between Marcionite theology and monarchianism (93). He labels this sort of sub-ordinationism "orthodox" and later argues that the theology of Arius cannot be seen as a logical development of this orthodox subordinationism (93–95). Marcus' reassessment of subordinationism has the merit of considering the phenomenon within its own histor-ical context instead of projecting anachronistic categories onto it. His is one of the few accounts that does so. Nevertheless, it is still interesting that his study is driven by deter-mining whether the subordinationists were legitimately the forebears of Arius. He offers a contextual reading of subordination, but he never quite escapes the orbit of the Nicene conflicts.

68   Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*, xix.

what it means to speak of subordinationist theologies in the third century. I must develop a definition of subordinationism that is based on specific theological statements in their third-century contexts. This definition contains no implicit or explicit evaluative judgment about whether something aligns with later theological standards. By defining subordinationism without reference to Nicene and post-Nicene theology, we can make more meaningful claims about what Origen sought to accomplish in his own theological context.[69] In addition, I formulate my definition of subordination with reference to my reconstruction of monarchianism in part one of the book, for the argument against monarchianism was one of the main places in which our third-century authors deployed their subordinationist theologies.

In order to avoid over-generalizing, I work with a definition of subordinationism created from examples in the three main texts I consider in the final chapter: Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, Novatian's *De Trinitate*, and Origen's *ComJn*.[70] As I observe when reading these three texts, the subordination of the Son to the Father is not a uniform phenomenon in the early third century. Thus, perhaps my definition will add nuance to the ways we speak of subordination. In the texts I survey, subordination often occurs when the authors speak of the relationship between a cause/source and its effect (in our case, the Father and Son). When authors are dealing with a cause and effect, the effect either lacks something present in the cause or possesses it less fully. For example, Tertullian claims that the Father is invisible because of the greatness of his majesty, but the Son is visible because his majesty is *derived* from the Father.[71] The Son has something derivatively from the Father (majesty), and because of this, has less of it than the Father. Because the Son has less majesty, he is able to be seen. Elsewhere, Tertullian speaks of the Father possessing the wholeness of substance while the Son only possesses a portion of it.[72]

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69   Along similar lines, see Mark Edwards' recent revisitation of the question of subordinationism. Mark Edwards, "Is Subordinationism a Heresy?," *TheoLogica: An International Journal for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology* 4, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 69–86. Edwards notes that varities of subordinationism, which he clearly defines, have been a regular part of more-or-less orthodox Christian theology from the beginning.

70   In the final chapter, I consider the texts in this order, which is not the chronological order in which they were written. I place Origen at the end of the chapter because he is the focus of my argument, which needed the context of Tertullian and Novatian already in place.

71   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.3.

72   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1–4. There is a tension in Tertullian's thought with regard to the visibility of the Son. In *Adversus Praxean* 9, he suggests that the Son is visible because his majesty is derivative. In *Adversus Praxean* 14, however, Tertullian argues that the Son is invisible as Word and Spirit because of the condition of his substance.

Novatian exhibits a similar manner of speaking about cause/source and effect. He argues that the Holy Spirit is less than the Son because the Spirit receives what it announces from the Son.[73] Novatian here does not even broach the question of whether the Spirit fully possesses what it receives from the Son; the mere act of reception implies that the Spirit is less (*minor*) than the Son. Novatian applies this same logic to the Father/Son relationship, arguing that the Son is less (*minor*) than the Father because the Son receives sanctification from the Father.[74] Later, Novatian uses an inverted form of the same logic. The Father is unoriginate; but the Son has an origin and is, therefore, less than (*minor*) the Father.[75] In this case, the Father's lack of something (an origin) is desirable. The Son is less than the Father and distinguished from him because he has an origin.[76] For both Tertullian and Novatian, the reception or derivation of something from a source necessarily implies that the recipient is less than the source. Novatian is explicit about this and states multiple times that the Son is less than (*minor*) the Father.[77] This is what I mean by subordination. Notice also that this definition does not require particular attention to the effect caused or the thing received.[78]

A similar scheme can be seen in Origen, but there are some notable variations with him. As I lay out in more detail in the final chapter, Origen has a hierarchical understanding of the universe, with the Father at the top. In my discussion of passages where Origen discusses the goodness of the Father and Son, Origen employs this hierarchy. He also speaks of the Father as the source of goodness and the Son as having his goodness from the Father (or being an image of that goodness).[79] In these passages, he speaks of the Father as being superior to the Son or superseding the Son (using ὑπερέχω and similar terms).

In the main passage from Origen that I survey (*ComJn* 2.13 ff.), Origen draws together a number of these concepts. He speaks about the Father as cause and source.[80] He speaks about the Son receiving divinity from the Father or drawing

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73   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16.3.

74   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.12.

75   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 31.3.

76   Despite the inversion of his logic, Novatian's position is consistent. In each case, the Son's existence or qualities are more tightly circumscribed than the Father who is unoriginate and possesses all good things in their fullness.

77   See, for example, *De Trinitate* 27.12, 31.3.

78   Later understandings of subordination will focus specifically on divinity and substance, but such was not necessarily the focus of the third century authors I consider. At various points, the anti-monarchian writers focus on the Son's reception of divinity, substance, goodness, and sanctification, among other things.

79   See especially, *ComJn* 13.151–153 and *ComMatt* 15.10.

80   At *ComJn* 2.14, he refers to the Father as the uncreated cause of the universe (τοῦ ἀγενήτου

it into himself.[81] At the end of this passage, Origen employs the same hierarchical framework as he does elsewhere and speaks of the Son being transcended by the Father.[82] It is clear that for Origen, the Father transcends the Son because he is cause and source (of goodness or divinity). What is interesting, however, is that in these passages Origen never explicitly says that the Son is less than the Father. It is an obvious implication of his affirmation of the transcendence of the Father, but the absence of explicit claims that the Son is inferior differentiates his subordination from that of Novatian and Tertullian. Thus, at the beginning of the third century, subordinationism was not some monolithic theological movement. Different authors accented their theologies differently so that we may speak of variation under the umbrella term "subordinationism."

In these texts, we see a relatively stable subordinationist framework. In this framework, the cause or source is greater than its effects or recipients. This is the common ground shared by all three authors I study in the last chapter. There is variation with how explicitly our authors draw out the consequences of this subordinationist logic. Some clearly claim that the Son is less than the Father, but Origen is content to say that the Father is superior to the Son. This implies the inferiority of the Son; but in the limited passages I have studied, Origen nowhere argues for the inferiority of the Son in explicit terms.[83] Furthermore, I avoid trying to speak too precisely and overdefine this subordination. Some authors wish to distinguish between the subordination of the incarnate Son and the subordination of the pre-existent/eternal Son. As Behr notes, however, such a distinction does not fit with Origen's understanding of the economy.[84]

τῶν ὅλων αἰτίου). Note again the alpha-privative descriptor. Later, Origen refers to both the Father and the Son as sources but sources of different things. At *ComJn* 2.20, he writes, "For both hold the place of a source; the Father, that of divinity, the Son, that of reason" (ἀμφό-τερα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν, ὁ μὲν πατὴρ θεότητος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς λόγου) (Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989], 100; Greek from SC 120:226).

81   In *ComJn* 2.17, he uses two verbs, σπάω and ἀρύω to speak of the Son "drawing" divinity into himself.

82   Origen, *ComJn* 2.32. Origen again uses ὑπερέχω to describe the transcendence of the Father over the Son.

83   This is a notable variation. A full exploration behind Origen's motivations for this variation is beyond the scope of my current project. As I broaden my further study of Origen beyond his early works, it will be worth tracking whether he ever explicitly speaks of the Son as inferior to the Father or is merely content to emphasize the Father's transcendence over the Son.

84   See especially Behr's discussion of the economy in his introduction of *De Principiis*. Origen, *On First Principles*, ed. and trans. John Behr, vol. 1, Oxford Early Christian Texts

My discussion of third-century subordinationism here, as with the fuller study in the final chapter, is an attempt to read Origen alongside his contemporaries and with reference to one of the primary polemical contexts of his day. I adopt the focus of scholarship on whether Origen was a subordinationist, but I reorient the discussion to the early third century instead of the late fourth. My account does not attempt to be as comprehensive as Bruns' more recent study. It is an exercise in a disciplined reading of important parts of Origen's oeuvre that considers his theology in its own context and a suggestion for how the rest of his corpus might profitably be reread. Even more, I am not interested in making any claims about subordinationism throughout the full breadth of Origen's career. Origen frequently advanced and tested hypotheses, so we ought not presume that something from one polemical context can then be universalized as an overarching pan-oeuvre theme of Origen's theology.[85]

5   Plan of the Book

This book is divided into two parts. The first part, which is roughly two-thirds of the whole, focuses on reconstructing monarchian theology. The second part offers a rereading of key passages from *ComJn* 1–2 with a focus on Origen's engagement with monarchian theology. In the first chapter, I attempt to provide a plausible background for the rise of monarchianism in the late second and early third centuries.

After my exploration of what might have prompted monarchianism, I undertake a reconstruction of monarchian theology in chapters two and three. I begin by examining the relevant sections of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which does not offer much direct testimony about monarchianism but does

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(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), lxv–lxxxviii. Regarding the incarnation in Origen, Behr writes, "That is, his presentation of the divine titles of Christ in *Princ*.1.2, expressive of his divine nature, was not a treatment of the 'pre-incarnate' Word, who subsequently at a certain point in the economy becomes 'incarnate'. As Rowan Williams strikingly puts it, and as we will have cause to consider more deeply later, 'the existence of Jesus is not an episode in the biography of the Word.'" (lxvi). See Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, Rev. ed (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2002), 244.

85   Specifically, I mean to emphasize that while I argue that Origen did deploy a subordinationist schema of relationship between the Father and Son, I do not intend to make any broad claims for this across his corpus, which is beyond the scope of this work. Even more, my main point is that in the specific context of anti-monarchian polemics, a subordinationist schema helped Origen distinguish the Father and Son. Other contexts for Origen might not require the same theological accent.

give us valuable background information about the church in Rome at the beginning of the third century. I then offer a close reading of the four main sources that attest to monarchianism. This reading occurs in what I deem to be the chronological order of the texts: Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, and Novatian's *De Trinitate*.[86]

In order to fill what I consider to be a lacuna in scholarship, my reconstruction of monarchian theology focuses on their major theological emphases and exegetical practices. To that end, I pay particular attention to their discussions of the unity of God, the divinity of Jesus, the visibility of God, and the suffering of God. With regard to exegesis, I draw particular attention to their focus on Old Testament theophanies and key passages from the Gospel of John. The result of these two chapters is a picture of monarchianism whose core teaching was that the Father and the Son were "one and the same." The monarchians actively denied that there was any real distinction between the Father and Son by emphasizing their sameness. My reading of these four sources also shows that while monarchianism maintained a stable core, there was development or disagreement with regard to some of the implications of the core teaching. Specifically, monarchians began to differ over whether their claim that the Father and Son were "one and the same" necessarily meant that the Father suffered.[87]

In part two of the book, I focus on rereading books 1–2 of Origen's *ComJn* in light of my reconstruction of the monarchian controversy. In chapter four, I begin by giving a detailed account of the date and context for the first two books of *ComJn*. There, I argue that Origen most likely wrote them in the midst of the monarchian controversy and most likely after his return from Rome, which was the epicenter of the monarchian controversy. Thus, I situate Origen firmly within the context of an early third-century debate. In the remainder of chapter four, I consider how the Wisdom Christology Origen develops in book one of *ComJn* has anti-monarchian polemical utility.[88]

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86   As becomes clear in those chapters, however, there is little consensus about the dating and authorship of *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio*. One group of scholars reverses the order and considers the *Refutatio* to be the earlier of the two. I discuss this matter in detail in the relevant chapters.

87   As I make clear in the relevant chapters, it is unclear if this diversity was synchronic or diachronic.

88   The core of this argument appears in Stephen Waers, "Wisdom Christology and Monarchianism in Origen's Commentary on John," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 60 (2015): 93–113.

In the final chapter of the book, I undertake a dense reading of *ComJn* 2.13 ff., which I consider to be an important passage for understanding Origen's early Trinitarian theology. I contextualize this passage by reading it alongside passages from Tertullian and Novatian which fit my definition of subordinationism above. In order to justify my focus on this passage instead of *De principiis*, which many scholars privilege in accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology, I include an excursus on the reliability of Rufinus' translations of Trinitarian passages in Origen.[89] At the end of my reading of this passage, I argue that Origen's theology can be properly labelled "subordinationist" when using my specific definition. Furthermore, I argue that Origen's subordinationism is helpfully elucidated when read alongside that of his rough contemporaries, Tertullian and Novatian. All three of these authors intentionally deployed subordinationist theologies in order to combat the monarchian assertion that the Father and Son were "one and the same." Novatian is perhaps the bluntest about how subordinationism functions as effective anti-monarchian polemic when he argues that what is less than the Father (that is, the Son) cannot be the same as the Father. This, I argue, is the primary horizon within which we must consider Origen's subordinationism.[90]

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89 There, I argue that at least with regard to Trinitarian passages, Rufinus' translations cannot be trusted. My position in this regard goes against the views of some major contemporary scholars. For example, in a review of a new translation of *De principiis* for a popular magazine, Christopher Beeley writes, "But the tide has finally turned. In recent decades, scholars have concluded that Rufinus's translation is generally reliable, and certainly more faithful than Koetschau's reconstruction." Christopher A. Beeley, "Rescuing Origen from Neglect," *The Living Church* (February 2016): 10.

90 Thus, we must offer a dense contextual reading of Origen's theology before we try to untangle the complicated legacy of his theology in the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century.

On the Origins of Monarchianism

1 Introduction

The origins of monarchianism are notoriously murky. The earliest substantial evidence we have of monarchianism comes from Hippolytus and Tertullian, both of whom are hostile witnesses. Because of the tendentious nature of these second-hand accounts, it is difficult to pinpoint the theological motivations that prompted the rise of monarchian theology. This chapter offers a plausible explanation for the rise of monarchianism by utilizing two sets of data. First, I demonstrate that the monarchians utilized a set of biblical passages already being contested by Gnostics and proto-orthodox Christians.[1] Second, I argue that the monarchians appropriated and transposed a key polemical phrase that originated in the polemic against the Marcionite and "Gnostic" tendency to divide God. Contrary to Marcion's assertion that the God of the Old Testament was just whereas the Father of Jesus was good, anti-Marcionite polemicists argued that "one and the same" God was both just and good. The monarchians utilized this phrase "one and the same" and applied it to the Father/Son relationship, thus lifting it from one polemical context and dropping it into an entirely new one.

2 The Disintegration of Divine Unity

2.1 *Marcion and the Two Gods*

Marcion had a complicated legacy, and his teaching drew harsh critique from a number of his contemporaries and successors.[2] Like many of those who were

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1 Both "Gnostic" and "proto-orthodox" are contested and occasionally controversial terms. Although scholars like Brakke have done good work to move us toward a more precise use of terms like "Gnostic", such precision is not necessary for the argument I am making here. Specifically, I mean only to broadly identify those who were called "Gnostics" in antiquity (with no need to distinguish between Valentinian and other strains) and their mainstream opponents. See David Brakke, *The Gnostics: Myth, Ritual, and Diversity in Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2010).

2 Judith Lieu argues that there are few fixed boundaries and borders within the Christianity of the mid-second century. She further argues that the Marcion we know is largely a construction of his opponents—especially since we are lacking material directly from the pen of

labeled "heretics," we possess no writings from Marcion himself. As Lieu notes, we only catch a glimpse of Marcion "through the lens of the words of others, who are for the most part engaged in an ever more heated and vigorous polemic against him."[3] Because of this, I do not attempt a comprehensive reconstruction of Marcion's thought. Rather, my goal here is to highlight one probable aspect of Marcion's teaching—or at least an aspect upon which his primary opponents agree.

Justin Martyr is one of our earliest witnesses to the teaching and influence of Marcion, but he does not dwell on the life or teachings of Marcion at any length. Justin mentions Marcion twice in his *First Apology*, and he focuses on the same aspect of Marcion's teaching both times.[4] First, he writes, "And there is someone called Marcion, from Pontus, who even now is still teaching those he can persuade to consider some other (ἄλλον τινὰ), greater than the creator God. And with the help of the demons, he has persuaded many from every race of humankind to utter blasphemies, and he has made them deny God the Maker of this universe and confess some other (ἄλλον δέ τινα) who is greater, beyond him."[5] Later, Justin gives a similar report, writing, "And, as we said before, the evil demons were also putting forward Marcion from Pontus, who even now teaches that the creator of all heavenly and earthly things, and the one proclaimed beforehand through the prophets—Christ his son—are to be renounced, but proclaims another (ἄλλον δέ τινα), beside God the fashioner of all things (δημιουργὸν τῶν πάντων θεόν), and similarly another son."[6] Both times, Justin accuses Marcion of proclaiming another [god]. Lieu notes that "Justin's sketch in the *Apology* of Marcion as teaching a certain other (ἄλλος τις) ('God' is understood) 'greater than the maker' and perhaps also a different Son alongside the one belonging to the creator will provide the secure hallmarks of

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Marcion. Nevertheless, I think the anti-Marcionite response in the second century demonstrates that there were at least some fixed boundaries within Christianity. Specifically, the magnitude of the anti-Marcionite response suggests that Marcion transgressed a boundary when he claimed that the God of the Old Testament and the Father of Jesus were different gods. See Judith Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

3   Lieu, 7. This is the same problem we will later face with the monarchians. Even if we cannot be certain about whether Marcion or the monarchians taught what they were accused of teaching, it is clear that their opponents judged certain tendencies to be dangerous.

4   For a detailed discussion on the theories regarding the numbering of Justin's *Apologies*, see Denis Minns and P.M. Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 21–31.

5   Justin, *1 Apology* 26.5 (trans. Minns and Parvis, 149–151.)

6   Justin, *1 Apology* 58.1 (trans. Minns and Parvis, 231).

Marcion in subsequent representations."[7] In both instances, Justin's focal point is the accusation that Marcion teaches another, greater god.[8]

A few decades later, Irenaeus arrays his polemical resources against Marcion. In book one of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus writes that "Marcion of Pontus succeeded Cerdo and amplified his doctrine."[9] Describing Cerdo, Irenaeus reports that he taught "that the God who had been proclaimed under the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the former was known, but the latter was unknown; again, the former was just, whereas the latter was benevolent."[10] Irenaeus then describes Marcion as teaching that the God of the OT "was the author of evil."[11] Jesus, then, was not the Son of this God, but of one higher than he. According to Irenaeus, Marcion taught that Jesus came to "abolish the prophets and the law and all the works of that god who made the world, whom he called Cosmocrator."[12] Irenaeus' report here mirrors the language attributed to Marcion by Justin: the God of the Old Testament is described primarily in terms of his creation of the world. Irenaeus promises a later exposé and refutation of Marcion's teaching, but such a treatise is not extant if it was ever written.[13]

At the beginning of *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian accuses Marcion of teaching that there are two gods.[14] Tertullian suggests that Marcion's alleged ditheism stems from an unhealthy preoccupation with the problem of evil. He returns to his point again, creating a stark juxtaposition between Marcion's teaching and what he deems to be Christian truth. He writes, "The principle, and consequently the entire, matter of discussion is one of number, whether it is permissible to suggest the existence of two gods ... But Christian verity has decisively asserted that if God is not one only, he does not exist."[15] In this respect, Tertullian's account of Marcion is in line with earlier ones. The chief

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7   Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 23.

8   Justin is uncomfortable with Marcion's theology on this point, even though he himself referred to the Son as *deuteros theos* and was not opposed to speaking of the Son as another God ... See especially, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56, where Justin argues that the Son is "another God and Lord alongside the maker of the universe (ὅτι ἐστὶ ... θεὸς καὶ κύριος ἕτερος παρὰ τὸν ποιητὴν τῶν ὅλων)."

9   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.27.2 (trans. ACW, 55:91).

10   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.27.1 (trans. ACW, 55:91): *docuit eum qui a lege et prohetis adnuntiatus sit Deus non esse Patrem Domini nostri Christi Iesu.*

11   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.27.2.

12   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.27.2: *dissoluentem prophetas et legem et omnia opera eius Dei qui mundum fecit, quem et Cosmocratorem dicit.*

13   Ireaneus, *Adverseus haereses* 1.27.4.

14   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.2: *Duos Ponticus deos affert.*

15   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.3: *Principalis itaque et exinde tota congressio de numero*

point of contention has to do with the number of gods. More specifically, Tertullian claims that Marcion taught that there was one just and wrathful god and another peaceful and loving God.[16]

In his relatively infrequent discussions of Marcion, Clement of Alexandria does not focus on the same aspects of Marcion's teaching as other second-century witnesses. Judith Lieu notes that Clement of Alexandria does not exhibit the same familiarity with Marcion's works as he does the works of Valentinus and Basilides.[17] Furthermore, Clement often discusses Marcion alongside Valentinus and Basilides, thus eliding the particularities of Marcionite doctrine.[18] Clement focuses on Marcion's evaluation of matter as evil in a way that indirectly supports the picture of Marcionite doctrine we get from other second-century sources. He writes, "Marcion's followers held natural processes as evil because they were derived from matter that was evil, and from a just demiurge."[19] The result of this doctrine is that, at least according to Clement, Marcionites engaged in a sort of asceticism as a means of escaping the just demiurge's evil creation.[20] Implicit in this statement is that there is another god who does not produce evil matter.

The consistent charge against Marcion from the second and early third centuries is that he taught that there were two gods, one just and the other good. The accent of the polemical response to Marcion was varied depending on the focus his opponents, but the charge of a disjunction between the two gods remained constant. This disjunction was the primary target of anti-Marcionite polemics. The responses that anti-Marcionite writers formed would eventually be repurposed by the monarchians.

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an duos deos liceat induci ... Sed veritas Christiana destricte pronuntiavit, Deus si non unus est, non est ...

16   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.6.

17   Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 127. See also Rudolf Riedinger, "Zur Anti-markionitischen Polemik Des Klemens von Alexandreia," *Vigiliae Christianae* 29, no. 1 (1975): 15–32.

18   See, for example of his grouping of the three in *Strom.* 7.17.108.

19   Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.3.12 (trans FC 85:263 with my modifications). The translator for FC translates δικαίου as "unrighteous" and proposes that the extant text be modified to read ἀδίχου because surely Marcion would not call the demiurge righteous. This is a fundamental error, for Marcion opposed the "just" god to a good god. For Marcion, to call God just was to indict God for not being loving or good. Thus, it is entirely unsurprising to see Marcion call the creation of the "just god" evil.

20   See Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic*, 131. For further discussion of this alleged asceticism, see Riedinger, "Zur Antimarkionitischen Polemik Des Klemens von Alexandreia."

2.2   *The "Gnostics" and a Densely Populated Pleroma*

In the second and third centuries, it was common for polemicists to lump various "Gnostic" teachers together with Marcion and undertake a refutation of them together. Irenaeus links them explicitly, writing, "again, according to them, Father of All, whom they style their Fullness and who is the good God of Marcion ..."[21] Because Gnosticism was often treated similarly to Marcion, I will only treat the "Gnostics" briefly in order to show that their opponents objected to their teaching on similar grounds to their objection to Marcion's. In asserting the oneness of the rule of truth against the teaching of the Gnostics, Irenaeus accuses them of "thinking up another God besides the Creator, Maker, and Nourisher of this universe."[22] Likewise, Irenaeus later argues that the Marcosians "select passages from the Scriptures in order to prove that Our Lord announced another Father beside the Creator of the universe."[23] This assertion that the Gnostics introduced "another god" recurs repeatedly through Ireneaus' exposé of their system.[24] Specifically, Irenaeus argues that they posit distinct beings from the multiple names of God: "If certain ones of them counter that according to the Hebrew language various names are given to God in the Scriptures, as, for instance Sabaoth, Eloae, Adonae, and many like them, and endeavor to prove from all this that there are various Powers and Gods, let them learn that all of these names are manifestations and titles of one and the same God."[25]

In his *Adversus Valentinianos*, Tertullian gives an account of the teaching of Valentinus and his followers that relies upon Irenaeus' earlier work. In the introductory sections, Tertullian describes the teachings of Ptolomaeus in a way that demonstrates a common concern with other polemicists. He writes, "afterwards, Ptolomaeus followed the same path; he segregated those attributes—such as feeling, influence, and motion—which Valentinus had included in the totality of the godhead into names and positions, i.e., Aeons considered as animate individuals having their existence apart from God."[26]

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21   Ibid., 2.1.2 (trans. ACW 65:17): *Erit enim secundum eos Pater omnium, quem uidelicet et Proonta et Proarchen uocant, cum Pleromate ipsorum, et Marcionis bonus Deus ...*

22   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.10.3 (trans. ACW, 55:50): *et alius Deus excogitetur praeter Fabricatorem et Factorem et Nutritorem huius uniuersitatis ...*

23   Ibid., 1.19.1 (trans. ACW 75): *eligentes de Scripturis suadere contendunt, uti ostendant Dominum nostrum alterum adnuntiare Patrem praeter Fabricatorem huius uniuersitatis.*

24   See especially his concentrated accusations in *Adv. haer* 2.10.1–2: his opponents teach that there is *alterum Deum.*

25   Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 2.35.3 (trans. ACW 65:111).

26   Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos* 4 (trans. Mark T. Riley, "Q. S. Fl. Tertulliani Adversus Valentinianos: Text, Translation, and Commentary" [Stanford University, 1971], 78.): *eam*

Tertullian demonstrates a similar concern in *Adversus Praxean*, when he reports that "Valentinus secludes and separates his 'projections' from their originator, and places them so far from him that an aeon is ignorant of its father …"[27] As with his predecessors and contemporaries, Tertullian is concerned with theological systems that posit the substantial existence of names or attributes of God. This hypostasizing of names and attributes, as far as Tertullian is concerned, constitutes a threat to the oneness of God.

Given the variety of Gnostic texts that are available in the wake of discoveries at Nag Hammadi, it is clear that there is great diversity within the groups that were commonly labeled as Gnostic. Nevertheless, nearly all of them had some sort of mythology about how the *pleroma* was populated. A prime example of this mythology is present in the *Apocryphon of John*. After a description of "the one," there is a lengthy description of the genesis of the Aeons that leads into the creation of Adam. Brakke notes that such mythology is one of the hallmarks of Gnosticism, which he distinguishes from Valentinianism.[28] As Einar Thomassen has demonstrated, however, Valentinianism also had a highly developed protology.[29] John Dillon argues that Gnosticism was not a complete rejection of monotheism, though. He asserts that the Gnostic fixation on "the one" and a single first principle is evidence of a sort of monism that he would place under the heading of "soft monotheism."[30] Even with this monistic foundation, anti-Gnostic writers still considered their pleromatology a threat to monotheism and rejected it as such.

3   A Shared Response: One and the Same

3.1   *Biblical Precedent*
Within the Corinthian church, Paul felt it necessary to address people who were using spiritual gifts in a divisive way. Specifically, he seeks to correct those who

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      postmodum Ptolomaeus intravit, nominibus et numeris Aeonum distinctis in personales substantias, sed extra deum determinatas, quas Valentinus in ipsa summa divinitatis (ut sensus et affectus, motus) incluserat.

27   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 8 (trans. Evans, 139).

28   See his discussion of Gnostic mythology: Brakke, *The Gnostics*, 52–62.

29   See his discussion of Valentianian protology: Einar Thomassen, "Valentinian Protology," in *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies: 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 193–329.

30   John Dillon, "Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1999), 69–79.

viewed certain spiritual gifts (such as *glossolalia*) as superior to others. In 1 Cor. 12, Paul begins by noting that there are distinct gifts and services within the church, but that all of these are from and refer back to the same God. He uses a similar construction numerous times in 1 Cor. 12:4–11. He writes,

> **4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit (τὸ δὲ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα); **5** and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord (καὶ ὁ αὐτὸς κύριος); **6** and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God (ὁ δὲ αὐτὸς θεὸς) who activates all of them in everyone. **7** To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. **8** To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit (τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα), **9** to another faith by the same Spirit (ἐν τῷ πνεύματι), to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit (ἐν τῷ ἑνὶ πνεύματι), **10** to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11** All these are activated by one and the same Spirit (τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα), who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.[31]
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>   NRSV

The problem Paul is addressing is that exercise of these distinct gifts threatens to create division within the church. Because these gifts all come from the same source, argues Paul, they ought to be used to promote the good of the "one body." The salient feature of Paul's usage here is that he counters the threat of division with repeated and emphatic use of the third person pronoun as an identifying adjective: "the same Spirit/Lord/God." Tertullian uses this passage to counter Marcion in *Adversus Marcionem* 5.8: "And as [Marcion] puts it on record that it is written in the law that the Creator will speak with other tongues and other lips, since with this reference he confirms ⟨the legitimacy of⟩ the gift of tongues, here again he cannot be supposed to have used the Creator's prophecy to express approval of a different god's spiritual gift." (Evans. 561) Irenaeus cites this passage in a section where he is arguing that the prophets proclaimed and spoke of the one God, in opposition to some who claim that the prophets saw and spoke of some "other."[32] All of the works of the Spirit, including the prophecies that flow from the Spirit, point to one and the same God.

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31   Translation from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
32   Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 4.20.5–6.

3.2   *Irenaeus*

Despite his promises in *Adversus haereses*, we do not have an extant full-length refutation of Marcion's teaching from Irenaeus. Since Irenaeus elsewhere links the error of Marcion to that of various Gnostic groups, however, his response to Gnostic teaching can be informative. Whereas Ireaneus' opponents sought to divide various titles for Jesus into separate beings, Irenaeus himself argued strongly that the different titles referred to the same person/being. He writes, "For, since the Word and Only-begotten and Life and Light and Savior and Christ and Son of God, and this same one became incarnate for us, have been shown to be one and the same (*cum enim unus et idem ostenditur*), the fabrication of their Ogdoad has been broken up." (1.9.3)[33] At the end of book one of *Adversus haereses*, Irenaeus suggests that "Perhaps some of them can be saved if they do penance and convert to the one and only Creator and God, the Maker of the universe (*unum solum Conditorem Deum et Factorem uniuersitatis*)."[34] Thus, Irenaeus makes clear that one of his principal difficulties with the followers of Valentinus is that they divide the one God into multiple parts.

Irenaeus employs a common strategy at multiple points in book two of *AH*. In each case, he discusses titles or qualities that his opponents would divide out into separate aeons. He then argues that these are in fact "one and the same." He begins by using his opponents' logic against them, arguing that since the Aeons derive from a unified source, they must also be unified. He writes, "Now, since this is so, Mind and Truth will become one and the same, just like Profundity and Silence, always adhering to each other."[35] Shortly thereafter, Irenaeus comments on the fact that some of the Aeons are named after mental processes. He rehearses the mental processes before concluding that, "This (i.e. thought), even while continuing in the mind, can very correctly be called a word, from which the uttered word is emitted. Now all these activities mentioned are one and the same thing: they have their origin in the mind and get their names because of development."[36] Later, he explains the same concept

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33   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 1.9.3 (trans. ACW 55:47): *Cum enim unus et idem ostenditur Logos et Monogenes et Zoe et Phos et Soter et Christus Filius Dei, et hic idem incarnatus pro nobis, soluta est Octonationis illorum compago*. Note that the same phrasing occurs in the Greek fragments extant for this text: Ἑνὸς γὰρ καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ δεικνυμένου Λόγου καὶ Μονογε-νοῦς καὶ Ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς καὶ Σωτῆρος καὶ Χριστοῦ καὶ Υἱοῦ Θεοῦ …

34   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.31.3 (trans. ACW 55:103).

35   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 2.12.2 (trans. ACW 65:39). *Hoc autem se sic habente, unum et idem fiet, quemadmodum Bythus et Sige, sic et Nus et Alethia semper adhaerentes inuicem …*

36   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 2.13.2 (trans. ACW 65:42): *Unum autem et idem est omnia quae*

using a material analogy: "And one cannot tell that one is younger or older by the light itself—for the world is one light—or by the torches themselves that received the light (for these were contemporaneous in their material substance, since the matter of the torches is one and the same) …"[37] In each case, Irenaeus uses similar phrasing. The things his opponents want to divide are actually "one and the same."

In a section where he deals with both Marcion and various Gnostic sects on creation, Irenaeus punctuates his rebuttal by claiming that "all things come from one and the same God."[38] Shortly after this section, Irenaeus offers a positive statement of what he views as the apostolic teaching. He writes, "In this way the apostles did not preach another God, nor another Fullness, nor one Christ who suffered and then rose, and another who flew upward and remained impassible, but one and the same God the Father, and Christ Jesus who rose from the dead."[39] This passage is of particular interest because it survives in both Latin and Greek, allowing us a glimpse at how Irenaeus might have originally phrased one of his constant refrains. Rather than teaching another god, as do the Marcionites, Irenaeus teaches "one and the same God and Savior/Father (ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θεὸν καὶ Σωτῆρα; sed unum eundem Deum Patrem)."[40]

3.3   *Clement of Alexandria*

Like most writers of the second century, Clement of Alexandria felt compelled to respond to the teaching of Marcion. Also like the other authors, Clement concentrates on Marcion's opposition of goodness and justice in God. He writes, "Now, everyone admits that God is good, even if they do so reluctantly. That the same God is also just, I need no further argument than the words used by the

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praedicta sunt, a no initium accipienta et secundum augmentum adsumentia appellationes. Irenaeus seems to be utilizing the Stoic distinction between the *logos endiathetos* and the *logos prophorikos*. When an inner word is externalized, argues Irenaeus, it does not thereby take on a completely separate existence, wholly disconnected from the inner word. For the later history of this in the monarchian controversy, see Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91.

37   Ireaneus, *Adversus haereses* 2.17.4 (trans. ACW 65:57): una enim et eadem est facularum materia.

38   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.11.4 (trans. ACW 64:54): *omnia autem ex uno et eodem ipso Deo*. Note also the parallel in 2.25.1.

39   Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 3.12.2 (trans. ACW 64:59). Sic non alium Deum nec aliam Plenitudinem adnuntiabant apostoli, nec alterum quidem passum et resurgentem: Christum, alterum uero qui sursum uolauerit et inpassibilis perseuerauerit, sed unum et eundem Deum Patrem et Christum Iesum qui a mortuis resurrexit …

40   The editors of the *Sources Chretiennes* edition note the discrepancy between the Greek and Latin and prefer the Latin reading of "Father" over the Greek's "savior." See *SC* 34:211.

Lord in the Gospel …"[41] Clement continues in the same discussion and writes, "We conclude unhesitatingly, then, that *one and the same God* (ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν) is both of these things (i.e. just and good) …"[42] In case his point was not abundantly clear, Clement continues, stating, "it is more than clear, then, that the one only God of the whole world (τὸ τῶν συμπάντων θεὸν ἕνα μόνον εἶναι) is truly good and just and the Creator and the Son is in the Father, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."[43] In a similar way, Clement argues against Marcion's assertion that the Old and New Testaments reveal different gods. He writes,

> Since the Testaments, chronologically two, granted in the divine economy with an eye to the stage of progress, are one in power, Old and New, being presented by the one God (ἑνὸς θεοῦ) through his Son. In the same way, the Apostle says in his *Epistle to the Romans*: 'The righteousness of God is there revealed to faith through faith,' teaching a single process of salvation proceeding from prophecy to its fulfillment in the gospel, through one and the same Lord (ἑνὸς καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ κυρίου).[44]

There are two things to note in Clement's response to Marcion and his followers. First, Clement repeatedly holds together that which Marcion tries to divide: the Old and New Testaments, God's goodness and justice. Second, Clement employs the same phrase multiple times against the Marcionites. Those things which the Marcionites try to divide are "one and the same (ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ)."

3.4   *Tertullian*

In his report on Marcion's teaching, Tertullian signaled that one of his primary concerns was the problem of number: whether there was one God or two.[45]

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41   Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* 1.8.71 (trans. FC 23:63): Ἀλλὰ ὅτι μὲν ἀγαθὸς ὁ θεός, καὶ ἄκοντες ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ πάντες· ὅτι δὲ καὶ δίκαιος ὁ αὐτὸς θεός, οὔ μοι χρὴ πλειόνων ἔτι λόγων τὴν εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ κυρίου παραθεμένῳ φωνήν …

42   Ibid., 1.8.73 (trans. FC 23:65): Σαφέστατα τοίνυν ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι θεὸν συλλογιζόμεθα ὧδέ πως·

43   Ibid., 1.8.74 (trans. FC 23:66): ὡς εἶναι ταῖς ἀληθείαις καταφανὲς τὸ τῶν συμπάντων θεὸν ἕνα μόνον εἶναι, ἀγαθόν, δίκαιον, δημιουργόν, υἱὸν ἐν πατρί, ᾧ ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, ἀμήν.

44   Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.6.29 (trans. FC 85:178 with my modifications): ἐπειδὴ δύο αὗται ὀνόματι καὶ χρόνῳ, καθ᾽ ἡλικίαν καὶ προκοπὴν οἰκονομικῶς δεδομέναι, δυνάμει μία οὖσαι, ἥ μὲν παλαιά, ἥ δὲ καινή, διὰ υἱοῦ παρ᾽ ἑνὸς θεοῦ χορηγοῦνται. ᾗ καὶ ὁ ἀπόστολος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους ἐπιστολῇ λέγει· "δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν," τὴν μίαν τὴν ἐκ προφητείας εἰς εὐαγγέλιον τετελειωμένην δι᾽ ἑνὸς καὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ κυρίου διδάσκων σωτηρίαν.

45   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 1.3.

Like other anti-Marcionite polemicists in the second and third centuries, Tertullian seeks to join what Marcion has rent asunder. He writes, "Both aspects, the goodness and the judgement combine to produce a complete and worthy conception of a divinity to which nothing is impossible."[46] He continues and employs a version of the same phrase we have already seen Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria use: "Take away Marcion's title, take away the intention and purpose of his work, and this book will provide neither more nor less than a description of *one and the same God*, in his supreme goodness and in his judgement—for these two conceptions are conjoined in God and in him alone."[47]

In the third book of *Adversus Marcionem*, he continues the same argument, asserting that those who do not recognize the Father cannot recognize the Son because "he is one and the same substance" as the Father, whom they did not recognize.[48] The same theme recurs throughout the rest of the work. Tertullian claims that the differences in the Old and New Testaments do not prove that there are two gods, but are, in fact, attributable to "one and the same God …"[49] Against the antitheses of Marcion, Tertullian argues that differences in the Bible are due to a diversity of purposes but not a diversity of powers. He writes, "Consider the purposes in hand, and you will perceive that there was *one and the same authority*, who arranged the provisioning of the people differently according to poverty or plenty, cutting it down when there would be abundance in the cities, precisely as he gave full supply when there was to be scarcity in the wilderness."[50] Thus, Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertullian use a common polemical strategy. Whatever things the Marcionites seek to divide and partition between the two gods, they seek to unite and attribute to "one and the same God."

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46   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 2.29 (trans. Evans, 167).

47   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 2.29 (trans. Evans, 167; italics mine): *Aufer titulum Marcionis et intentionem atque propositum operis ipsius, et nihil aliud praestaret quam demonstrationem eiusdem dei optimi et iudicis, quia haec duo in solum deum competunt.*

48   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 3.6 (trans. Evans, 187): *per eiusdem substantiae condicionem …*

49   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.1: *unum et eundem deum …*

50   Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.24 (trans. Evans, 391; italics mine): *Considera causarum offerentiam, et intelleges unam et eandem potestatem quae secundum penuriam et copiam expeditionem suorum disposuit, proinde per civitates abundaturam circumcidens sicut et egituram per solitudinem struxerat.*

4   Mapping the Contested Exegetical Terrain: The Oneness of God and Biblical Exegesis in the Second Century

As I argue in the following chapters, the monarchian claim that the Father and Son are "one and the same" was an enduring and central feature of monarchian theology. In our extant witnesses, the monarchian wording of this claim is almost identical to the set of phrases Irenaeus, Clement, and Tertullian deployed against both the Marcionites and various Gnostic groups. The verbal parallels raise an important question: were the monarchians dependent upon the earlier anti-Marcionite and anti-Gnostic arguments of other second-century theologians? Such a question, however, cannot be answered directly. Since we possess no writings from the monarchians themselves, we cannot reach decisive conclusions about which sources they employed. We can, however, make a strong circumstantial argument that the monarchians were aware of and involved in the arguments about the unity and diversity of God taking place between Marcionites, Gnostics, and various "proto-orthodox" theologians.

Near the beginning of *Contra Noetum*, which I consider to be the earliest of the anti-monarchian treatises, the Noetians quote Isaiah 44:6 to support their claim that there is only one God.[51] The text reads as follows: "'I,' he says, 'am first and I am last and after me there is no one.' Thus they are alleging to sustain one God."[52] In *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian quotes Isaiah 45:5 when he writes, 'Therefore there is one God, the Father, and besides him there is no other, and

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[51]   When discussing any of the works attributed to Hippolytus, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is no consensus on the dating and authorship of the works to which his name is attached. A full discussion of all of the problems associated with the Hippolytan corpus occurs in later chapters, but the following will suffice for the current argument. I find Simonetti's general take on the Hippolytan problem more convincing than that of Allen Brent. In short, I take *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* to be the products of two different authors—the former, the product of an Asian writer and the latter, the product of a writer in Rome. I also consider *Contra Noetum* to be earlier than the *Refutatio*, which was probably written between 225–235 C.E. For a good introduction to all of the questions about Hippolytus, see Nautin's classic study, the two Italian volumes produced during conferences on Hippolytus, and Brent's labyrinthine tome: Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe: contribution a l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle*, Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1 (Paris, 1947); *Ricerche Su Ippolito*, Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum" 13 (Rome, 1977); *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis "Augustinianum" 30 (Rome, 1989); Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 31 (Leiden and New York, 1995).

[52]   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, 2.2–2.3. Ἐγώ, φησίν, πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσχατος καὶ μετ' ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐστιν οὐδείς. οὕτω φάσκουσιν συνιστᾶν ἕνα θεόν.

he himself who introduces this [statement] is denying, not the Son, but another god: whereas the Son is not another [god] than the Father.'[53] Tertullian appears to be countering the use to which we see the parallel passage put in *Contra Noetum*. Such a statement, he argues, does not deny that the Son is distinct from the father; it denies that idols are gods.

It is clear from *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* that the monarchians used these passages from Deutero-Isaiah to support an exclusive understanding of monotheism. Their understanding of monotheism was so rigorous that they accused their opponents of being ditheists. This accusation of ditheism caused their opponents (like Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Novatian) to reassert their own commitment to monotheism. As one would expect, they too used passages from Deutero-Isaiah to demonstrate their commitment to monotheism.[54] In their debate about monotheism, the Monarchians and their opponents were staking claim to the same passages. As mentioned above, Tertullian disarmed his opponents and claimed the passages from Deutero-Isaiah for his own statement of monotheism.[55] The author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* removed almost all scriptural references and allusions in his reports on his Monarchian opponents, but an echo of these passages from Isaiah 44–45 might still remain. The *Refutatio* has Noetus claiming that the Father and Son are one and the same, 'not one coming to be from another, but himself from himself (γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ)'.[56] The rejection of the Son as ἕτερος by Noetus might be a reference to the refrain of Isaiah 44–45.[57] In his later treatise, Novatian quotes Isaiah 45:21–22 and, like Tertullian, uses it to refute idolatry and polytheism.[58]

Passages from Isaiah 44–45 were used by both the Monarchians and their opponents in order to prove that each had the proper understanding of Monotheism. That exegesis of passages from Deutero-Isaiah was an important part of

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53   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*, 18.3 (trans. Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London, 1948), 156).

54   In the *Contra Noetum*, Hippolytus does not adduce passages from Deutero-Isaiah to support his contention that there is only one God. It was still quite an important point for him, however. He begins his own demonstration of the truth by bluntly stating that there is only one God. *Contra Noetum*, 9.1. Note also that in response to Noetus, the elders mentioned at the beginning of *Contra Noetum* claimed that they also had knowledge of only one God, but in the true way. *Contra Noetum*, 1.7.

55   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*, 18.3.

56   *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, 9.10.11.

57   Note also that this could be a reaction to Justin's theology in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin unabashedly referred to the Son as another God. See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 56.4.

58   Novatian, *De Trinitate*, 3.2.

their debate about monotheism is easy to see in the primary texts. Because the texts that attest to Monarchianism were written to oppose the Monarchians, they are not focused on Gnosticism—thus making it difficult for us to determine what the relationship between monarchianism and Gnosticism might have been. As I noted earlier, the best way to approach the relationship between the two is by using circumstantial or indirect evidence. One main example will suffice to demonstrate that some Gnostics inhabited the same polemical landscape wherein theologians offered competing interpretations of Isaiah 44–45.

Multiple texts from Nag Hammadi that describe the arrogance of Ialdabaoth or Sakla put passages from Isaiah 44–45 on the lips of the demiurge. After an account of the generation of the Aeons, the *Apocryphon of John* records the genesis of Ialdabaoth, the demiurge.[59] It states concerning him, 'And he is impious in his arrogance which is in him. For he said, "I am God and there is no other god beside me," for he is ignorant of his strength, the place from which he had come.'[60] This passage about the arrogance of the demiurge has a number of parallels in other literature from Nag Hammadi, which often includes the same or similar passages from Deutero-Isaiah.[61] The passage in the *Apocryphon of John* deliberately draws attention to the irony of Ialdabaoth uttering these words from Deutero-Isaiah when it states that he was ignorant of his origin. Ialdabaoth, the chief ruler (ἄρχων is used in the Coptic), is unaware of the Aeons above him, and the God and Father of All who is described at the begin-

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59   The date and provenance of the text are notoriously difficult to determine, but Karen King suggests that it was written in Alexandria during the second century. Karen L. King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (Cambridge, Mass., 2006), 10. King and others note that Irenaeus seems to have been familiar with the work by ca. 180. Ibid., 17.

60   *Apocryphon of John*, NHC II, 11.16–21. Translation from Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse (eds), *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 33 (Leiden and New York, 1995), 71. The section I have just quoted only appears in the longer version of the *Apocryphon*. Note also that Karen King briefly discusses this passage as demonstrating the relationship between Judaism, Gnosticism, and Christianity. She does not state that this might be part of a *theological* debate about monotheism. See King, *The Secret Revelation of John* (2006), 15–16.

61   See the parallels in *The Gospel of the Egyptians* (NHC III, 58.23–26); *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth* (NHC VII, 53.30–34); *On the Origin of the World* (NHC II, 103.6–25); *Hypostasis of the Archons* (NHC II, 86.26–87.4). *On the Origin of the World* was probably not written until the end of the third century; but despite its later date, it still attests to the same tradition of attributing the Isaiah passages to the arrogant demiurge. For the dating, see Hans-Gebhard Bethge, "Introduction," in Bentley Layton (ed), *Nag Hammadi Codex II, 2–7: Together with XIII, 2*, Brit.Lib. Or.4926(1), and P.OXY. 1, 654, 655: With Contributions by Many Scholars*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 21 (Leiden and New York, 1989), 13–14.

ning of the treatise.[62] The usage of this passage from Deutero-Isaiah is at odds
with the ways in which both the Monarchians and their opponents came to
use the same passages; despite their different interpretations, neither of them
would have admitted that there was any God above YHWH, who spoke these
words. Even more, the use of this passage by Ialdabaoth gives us a glimpse of
what some scholars have suggested is a revolt against and within Judaism.[63]

In their commentary on the passages describing the arrogance of Ialdabaoth
or Sakla, scholars do not attend to the fact that the words put on the lips of the
demiurge were at the center of competing conceptions of monotheism in the
second century.[64] This failure to detect the broader context is due, in part, to the
theories about Gnosticism as a pre-Christian phenomenon that were dominant
when many of the critical editions of the Nag Hammadi texts were produced.[65]
When considering the exegetical tendencies at work in Gnosticism alongside
those of Monarchianism, however, it is clear that they are focused on many of

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62 See also Alan Segal's discussion of the irony of this monotheistic claim on the lips of the
    demiurge: Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity
    and Gnosticism*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 25 (Leiden, 1977), 251–253. John Dil-
    lon notes that despite passages like this, one can still speak of a type of monotheism within
    Gnosticism: John Dillon, 'Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition,' in Polymnia Athanas-
    siadi and Michael Frede (eds), *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, (Oxford and New York,
    1999), 69–79.

63 George W. MacRae, 'Jewish Background of the Gnostic Sophia Myth,' *Novum Testamentum*
    12 (1970), 86–101, 97–98. Note also that despite this explicit rejection of the monotheistic
    claims of Deutero-Isaiah, John Dillon has argued that Gnosticism is still fundamentally
    monotheistic—or at least monistic. Dillon, 'Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition' (1999).

64 For example, in his commentary on the passage from *The Second Treatise of the Great
    Seth*, Louis Painchaud does not even mention that the words of Sakklas are from Deutero-
    Isaiah. He spends a good deal of time examining how the text interacts with the Gospel of
    John, but the same attention is not given to the passage from Isaiah. See Louis Painchaud
    (ed.), *Le deuxième traité du Grand Seth* (*NH VII,2*), Bibliothèque copte de Nag Hammadi 6
    (Québec, 1982), 94–96. Böhlig and Wisse note that the words *The Gospel of the Egyptians*
    puts on the lips of Sakla are from Deutero-Isaiah, but they do not mention the broader
    polemical use of these passages: Alexander Böhlig, Frederik Wisse, and Pahor Labib (eds),
    Nag Hammadi Codices III, 2 and IV, 2: The Gospel of the Egyptians (*The Holy Book of the
    Great Invisible Spirit*), Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 4 (Grand Rapids, 1975), 184.
    Bethge identifies the quotation in *On the Origin of the World*, but like the others, makes no
    mention of the polemical context of the verse. Bethge, 'Introduction' (1989), 14–15. Bullard
    notes the quotation in *The Hypostasis of the Archons* but not its contemporary usage. Roger
    Aubrey Bullard and Martin Krause (eds), *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, Patristische Texte
    Und Studien 10 (Berlin, 1970), 49.

65 Of note here are the many theories that considered Gnosticism to be largely the product
    of Eastern or Persian religions and not primarily an offshoot from and reaction to Judaism
    and Christianity.

the same texts. Aside from the passages from Deutero-Isaiah, both the Monarchians and the various forms of Gnosticism fixated on the interpretation of the prologue to the Gospel of John. Irenaeus records a Gnostic interpretation of the Johannine prologue in the second book of *Adversus haereses*.[66] Origen reports that Heraclides, a monarchian bishop, quoted the beginning of John's Gospel as a profession of his as-yet uncorrected Monarchian faith.[67]

In addition to this common web of scriptural texts, other clues suggest that monarchianism was an intentional opponent of Gnosticism. When Tertullian describes the distinction of the Son from the Father in chapters 7–8 of *Adversus Praxean*, he clarifies that his distinction of the Son is not like the separation of the projections from the source that occurs within the Valentinian *Pleroma*. Against the Monarchian identification of the Father and the Son, Tertullian felt obligated to argue for their distinction. His anti-Valentinian excursus, however, suggests that his attempts at distinguishing the Father and Son might have been met with accusations that he was adopting the theology of Valentinus. Such an association of a theologian with Valentinian theology would have been an effective way for the monarchians to pillory their opponents and perhaps further demonstrates the interconnectedness of monarchianism and Gnosticism.

Thus, while our accounts of monarchianism do not explicitly show them in conflict with Gnosticism, the exegetical and thematic overlap suggests, contra Evans, that monarchian theology was shaped at least in part as a reaction against Gnosticism.[68] If the monarchians accused Tertullian, Hippolytus, et al., of being ditheists, they must have considered the *Pleroma* of the Gnostics to be nothing short of rank polytheism. When the monarchians chose to use passages from Deutero-Isaiah in support of their exclusive conception of monotheism, they entered into a well-worn exegetical path. By offering their own interpretation of these verses, they rejected those of their contemporaries and of those who preceded them.[69] They could have used other classic expres-

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66 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 2.28.5.

67 Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides*, 1.

68 Earnest Evans writes, "It is sometimes suggested that Monarchianism was a reaction against Gnosticism. There seems to be little or no evidence of this. The term *monarchy* was introduced into Christian theology by the apologists as a protest against polytheism. It was afterwards used as a catchword by the professors of that form of Unitarian doctrine which denied the distinction of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Ernest Evans, "Introduction," in *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 7.

69 Note also that in the second century, Athenagoras used the combination of Isaiah 44:6 and Baruch 3:36 to lend scriptural support to his otherwise philosophical defense of monotheism. Athenagoras, *Legatio*, 9.1–3. Although I don't have time to address it in this book, the combination of these two verses is an exact parallel to the usage in *Contra Noetum*.

sions of monotheism, like the Shema (Deut. 6:4 ff.), but they chose the very same passages from Isaiah as were placed on the lips of Ialdabaoth. This, I think, is more than mere coincidence. It shows monarchianism pitted against both Gnosticism and the proto-orthodox in an attempt to preserve an exclusive interpretation of monotheism.

5   Transposition of a Theme: Monarchian Application of "One and the Same" to the Father-Son Relationship

As I detail in later chapters, one of the central claims of the monarchians was that the Father and Son were "one and the same." By the beginning of the third century when monarchianism rose to prominence, it is clear that anti-Gnostic writers employed a number of common polemical responses. As I have demonstrated, one of these responses was to claim that the hypostasized Aeons of the Gnostics or Marcion's two gods were not distinct divine figures but were, in fact, distinct characteristics of "one and the same God." The frequent use of this polemical phrase gave it currency within the early third-century church. Based on the fact that monarchians were utilizing the same set of biblical passages as the Gnostics and their opponents, it is fair to assume that they were involved in the same larger argument about the unity and diversity of God. This line of reasoning is strengthened by the monarchians' unshakeable fixation on preserving the oneness of God.

When read against this backdrop, it is easier to understand why monarchianism won such a wide following at the dawn of the third century. The monarchians were involved in one of the most pressing theological debates of the day. They anchored their arguments in what they sold as common-sense readings of key biblical passages. And, finally, they held as their rallying cry that they were staunch defenders of the central theological claim that there is only one God. Such a platform would have been attractive to a large subset of Christians.

Even more than this, their use of the phrase "one and the same" was a shrewd polemical move. The monarchians situated themselves within the central theological debate of the early third century. They could have cast themselves as making common cause with the "proto-orthodox" against Gnosticism, but they then grabbed a key polemical catchphrase from the proto-orthodox and reappropriated it to oppose any distinction between the Father and the Son. This polemical sleight-of-hand would have made it easy for everyday Christians to uncritically accept the reappropriation of this phrase into a different theological argument.

Because we do not have any surviving monarchian texts that directly connect them to the argument against Gnosticism, this can only be viewed as a plausible reconstruction of the events. But this interpretation of the extant evidence has the benefit of explaining three key points. First, an anti-Gnostic context helps shed light on the particular web of biblical texts the monarchians focused on. Second, the putative anti-Gnostic polemical context and catchphrase explains the popularity of monarchianism. Finally, a theological movement that was focused on preserving the oneness of God would have been hard pressed not to respond to Gnosticism at the beginning of the third century. Given the theological milieu of the time, a conflict with Gnosticism was virtually unavoidable. Thus, in my reconstruction, monarchianism arose both as a rejection of Marcionite and Gnostic theology and as a response to a perceived division in the Godhead introduced by developing conceptions of the Father-Son relationship.[70]

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70 This specific context helps make sense of the fact that Origen interacts at length with monarchianism in the midst of his *Commentary on the Gospel of John* that was written against a gnostic reading of the Gospel. Monarchianism and Gnosticism were operating on the same contested exegetical terrain.

Eusebius, *Contra Noetum*, and *Adversus Praxean*

1   Introduction: The Beginnings of Monarchianism

The monarchian controversy erupted in Rome at the beginning of the third century. Although second-century theologians exhibited varying levels of concern to articulate the distinction between the Father and Son, none explicitly denied their distinction and claimed that they were the same. Nor did they seem to be defending this distinction against those who denied it. This denial of distinction, however, is precisely what was at the heart of monarchian theology. The monarchians denied any distinction between the Father and the Son in order to protect a commitment to the oneness of God.

Theologies that stressed the alterity of Father and Son were the direct target of monarchian teaching. With that key assumption in place, I turn to a detailed analysis of the main texts of the period that bear witness to monarchian theology. Unfortunately, we do not possess any texts from the monarchians themselves. We are, thus, left with the difficult task of reconstructing monarchian theology using only the fragmentary evidence we can extract from hostile witnesses.

Although it is the latest of the texts I survey, I begin with an overview of passages relevant to monarchianism in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*.[1] He has little to say about monarchianism itself, but his work does elucidate the state of the church in Rome at the time when monarchianism made its appearance. Next, I discuss Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*, which I take to be the earliest of the sources attesting to monarchiansim.[2] Then, I examine Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, which I consider to be dependent on *Contra Noetum*. These two sources are the earliest attestation to monarchianism, and they show that there was a stable core to monarchian theology. Even within the the closely-related *Contra Noetum and Adversus Praxean*, we can see signs of variation.

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1   Although dated the latest, the work provides a description of key figures placed within their historical context—thus giving a good overview.

2   I offer a full argument regarding the date and authorship of *Contra Noetum* and the other third-century works below.

2   Eusebius

Although Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* (EH) dwells at some length on the life of the church in the late second and early third centuries, it offers relatively little information on the varieties of monarchianism that were prevalent at the beginning of the third century.[3] His omission of details about monarchianism does not seem to be motivated by a lack of concern for Trinitarian or Christological issues since he lays out what he considers to be a proper view of Christ at the beginning of EH.[4] Despite the absence of any in-depth treatment of monarchianism itself, Eusebius does provide chronology and lists of succession for the bishops of major sees during the period that can be useful for determining the chronology of the monarchian controversy and some of its possible antecedents.

In his discussion of the Ebionites, Eusebius states that they held a low view of Christ and denied his miraculous birth.[5] Specifically, according to Eusebius, they taught that Christ was a simple (λιτόν) and common (κοινόν) man. Others of the same name, recounts Eusebius, did not deny the virgin birth but nevertheless denied the pre-existence of the Son.[6] In a later discussion of the Ebionites, Eusebius states that they held Christ to be a mere man (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον).[7] Variations on these themes will show up in later anti-monarchian polemic, although Eusebius' laconic treatment of them gives us little information about what motivated the positions.

Eusebius uses the word μοναρχία twice in EH, and both of his uses are in reference to works of other authors. In the first reference, Eusebius attributes to Justin a work entitled περὶ θεοῦ μοναρχίας.[8] Next, Eusebius tells us that Irenaeus

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3   Reinhard Hübner argues that Eusebius' silence regarding monarchianism is confirmation of his contention that it was the dominant position well into the third century. See his, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 31. Many of Hübner's assertions, however, are built on dubious assumptions and chronology.

4   Eusebius, *EH* 1.2.

5   Eusebius, *EH* 3.27.

6   Robert M. Grant helpfully notes that this twofold categorization of the Ebionites comes from Origen and that Eusebius probably mentioned the second class so that he could distance himself from their teaching. See Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 91.

7   Eusebius, *EH* 6.17.

8   Eusebius, *EH* 4.18. We now know that this treatise which Eusebius attributes to Justin was not written by Justin. The treatise is a collection of excerpts from Greek literature arguing against polytheism and idolatry. There is little in this treatise that makes it distinctively Christian, although many scholars assume that it is. For a good introduction and critical edition, see Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Cohortatio ad Graecos; De monarchia; Oratio ad Graecos*, Patristis-

composed a number of letters to address conflicts in the Roman church. One of these letters was addressed to Florinus and was entitled περὶ μοναρχίας.[9] Eusebius reproduces a quotation from this letter wherein Irenaeus emphasizes his connection to Polycarp, who, in turn, was connected to the apostles. Irenaeus then repeats that Polycarp would have taken great offense at the things Florinus was teaching. Eusebius states that Florinus was defending the position that God was the author of evil. In addition to this letter, Eusebius writes that Irenaeus composed a treatise *On the Ogdoad* because Florinus seems to have been attracted to Valentinianism.[10]

It is striking that Irenaeus would write a letter *On Monarchy* to someone who was inclined to Valentinianism. An emphasis on the monarchy or sole rule of God could serve as a sharp rebuff of Valentinian pleromatology which included a multiplication of divine figures who often rebelled against those above them in the hierarchy of the Pleroma. Unfortunately, there is very little in the quotation that would alert us to the specifics of Florinus' teaching or Irenaeus' response.[11] If the title is indicative of anything, it appears that Irenaeus employed the concept of monarchy to counter the Valentinian leanings of Florinus. It is also important to remember here that Irenaeus gives no indication that the monarchian controversy had begun at the time of his writing. Furthermore, Irenaeus was certainly not a monarchian. That he could use the term monarchy to rebuff Gnosticism, however, demonstrates that such a use might have been appealing a few decades later for those who wished to defend the uniqueness of God.

Eusebius mentions a certain Apelles a few times in book five, following his source Rhodo, and lumps Apelles with Marcion despite variance in their teaching.[12] Eusebius repeatedly states that Apelles taught that there is only one principle (μίαν ἀρχήν). He contrasts this position to that of Marcion, who taught that

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che Texte und Studien 32 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1990). Since we do not know the author of the text, dating it can be rather difficult. The two major pieces of information that inform dating the text are (1) the fact that it is cited by Eusebius, and (2) some phraseology that seems to mimic Clement of Alexandria. Therefore, the latest it was composed was 311–312. Given the apparent knowledge of Clement, the earliest date of the text would have been the last few years of the second century. Marcovich splits the difference and argues that it was probably written in the middle of the third century. Ibid., 82.

9   Eusebius, *EH* 5.20. Unfortunately, this letter is no longer extant.

10   Ibid. The Greek title of the work is περὶ ὀγδοάδος.

11   Ernest Evans was unconvinced that anti-Gnostic sentiment was an impetus for the rise of Monarchianism. See his "Introduction," in *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 6. As I have argued in the first chapter, however, an anti-Gnostic context for monarchianism has the virtue of explaining a good deal of the extant data.

12   Eusebius, *EH* 5.13: "He said that he did not know how the unbegotten God is one but that

there were two principles (δύο ἀρχάς), and still others who taught that there were three natures (τρεῖς φύσεις). When pressed on this teaching that there was only one principle, Apelles was unable to defend it, but he held it nonetheless.[13] Before the outbreak of the monarchian controversy proper, theologians used the word μοναρχία to refute both pagan polytheism and other positions that imperiled the unity of God.[14]

At the end of book five of *EH*, Eusebius provides us with the work's most useful information for our reconstruction of the monarchian controversy. It is contained within another writing that Eusebius quotes three times, which he refers to as a treatise "against the heresy of Artemon."[15] Some scholars argue that the sources Eusebius quotes in the *EH* are often of more value than Eusebius' own history or theology because his thought is often driven by polemical concerns.[16] Even in his introduction of these quotations, Eusebius' concern with Paul of Samosata is signaled when he accuses Paul of trying to renew the heresy of Artemon. His animosity toward Paul of Samosata shapes how he writes and what information he includes.

Scholars have pointed out that although Eusebius mentions a treatise against Artemon, the quotations that Eusebius has preserved do not mention Artemon by name.[17] There have, therefore, been numerous attempts to determine the title of the treatise and its author. Many scholars are confident that the title of this treatise from which Eusebius quotes is *The Little Labyrinth*.[18]

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he believed it" (trans. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 1–5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library 153 [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926], 469).

13   The problem with the teaching of Apelles seems to have been his views regarding seemingly contradictory material in the Old Testament.

14   The work of Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao on the uses of *monarchia* prior to the outbreak of the controversy at the beginning of the second century is very informative here. See his *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie 1: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996). Note also the discussion of the uses of *monarchia* at Evans, "Introduction," 6–9.

15   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.

16   See, for example, the rather harsh appraisal of Robert Grant: "Eusebius' accounts of the early heresies thus possess no value apart from that of the documents he quoted or paraphrased" (*Eusebius as Church Historian*, 86). See also John T. Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," in *The Early Church in Its Context*, ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, James W. Thompson, and Frederick Norris (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 120–121.

17   Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," 124; Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 91–92.

18   Note also Cosentino's extensive discussion of the Artemon passage and *The Little Labyrinth*. Augusto Cosentino, "The Authorship of the Refutatio Omnium Haeresium," *Zeitschrift Für Antikes Christentum* 22, no. 2 (2018): 218–237.

The main piece of evidence supporting this conclusion comes from Theodoret's *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*.[19] Near the beginning of part two of his *compendium*, Theodoret offers brief accounts of the heresy of Artemon and Theodotus, both of whom Eusebius mentions. Then Theodoret states that "*The Little Labyrinth* was written against the heresy of these [two]."[20] Scholars have preferred the title *The Little Labyrinth* because they are relatively certain that Theodoret has in mind the same text Eusebius quotes. Although we have here no definitive proof of the actual title of the treatise, we can be confident that it was known by this name at the time of Theodoret's writing.[21]

Although scholars have settled upon the title *The Little Labyrinth* for this treatise, there is much less certainty regarding the authorship and date of the work. The most frequently suggested authors are Origen, Gaius, and Hippolytus. Theodoret notes that "some assume it is the work of Origen but the style [of the writing] refutes those saying [so]."[22] The association of Gaius with the treatise is rather limited. The suggestion for authorship that has received the most support is that of Hippolytus.[23] Fitzgerald argues that there are insurmountable objections to the Hippolytan authorship of this text and suggests that viewing it as anonymous is the safest way to proceed.[24] After his thorough discussion of the problems of authorship associated with *The Little Labyrinth*, Fitzgerald offers a proposal for the dating of the work. He argues that because Hippolytus seems to be unaware of Artemon, the career of Artemon in Rome must have post-dated the work of Hippolytus. He suggests that the work was probably written sometime between 240 and 255 CE.[25] Although it appears to post-date many of the other works that attest to the monarchian controversy,

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19   For a full discussion of the evidence, see Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," 124–126.

20   Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 2.4–5 (PG 83.389–392). Translation mine. Κατὰ τῆς τούτων αἱρέσεως ὁ σμικρὸς συνεγράφη Λαβύρινθος.

21   Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," 126.

22   Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 2.5 (PG 83.392). Translation mine. ὅν τινες Ὠριγένους ὑπολαμβάνουσι ποίημα, ἀλλ' ὁ χαρακτὴρ ἐλέγχει τοὺς λέγοντας.

23   Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," 133; Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian*, 91–92.

24   Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and the Little Labyrinth," 133–136. "In view of these and other problems in attributing the document to Hippolytus, it is not surprising that the majority of contemporary scholars appear to reject Hippolytus's putative authorship and treat the work as strictly anonymous. Until a cogent case can be made on behalf of some other early Christian author, The Little Labyrinth is best viewed as a truly anonymous document" (136).

25   Ibid., 136–144.

it is still of value because it gives us an alternative glimpse into Rome during the period when the controversy was just beginning.

Between his quotations of *The Little Labyrinth*, Eusebius provides us with an account of the succession of Roman bishops following Victor.[26] In the *Refutatio*, both Zephyrinus and Callistus are cast in a negative light and as major personalities in the controversy. Eusebius states that Zephyrinus succeeded Victor during the ninth year of the reign of Severus.[27] The majority of Eusebius' references to Zephyrinus are in passing in lists of succession and do not imply anything about what his role in the monarchian controversy might have been. In Eusebius' first quotation from *The Little Labyrinth*, we learn a bit more about Zephyrinus, even though the account is more suggestive than explicit. This quotation from *The Little Labyrinth* merits being reproduced in full:

> For they say that all who went before and the apostles themselves received and taught what they now say, and that the truth of the teaching was preserved until the times of Victor, who was the thirteenth bishop in Rome after Peter, but that the truth had been corrupted from the time of his successor, Zephyrinus. What they said might perhaps be plausible if in the first place the divine Scriptures were not opposed to them, and there are also writings of certain Christians, older than the time of Victor, which they wrote to the Gentiles on behalf of the truth and against the heresies of their own time. I mean the works of Justin and Miltiades and Tatian and Clement and many others in all of which Christ is treated as God. For who is ignorant of the books of Irenaeus and Melito and the others who announced Christ as God and man? And all the Psalms and hymns which were written by faithful Christians from the beginning of the Christ as the Logos of God and treat him as God. How then is it possible that after the mind of the church had been announced for so many years that the generation before Victor can have preached as these say? Why are they not ashamed of so calumniating Victor when they know quite well that Victor excommunicated Theodotus the cobbler, the founder and father of this insurrection which denies God, when he first said that Christ was a mere man (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον)? For if Victor was so minded towards them as their blasphemy teaches, how could he have thrown out Theodotus who invented this heresy?[28]

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26   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.
27   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.
28   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28 (trans. LCL 153:517–519).

Because Eusebius seeks to show the unity of the episcopate and continued line of teaching, he remains positive regarding Zephyrinus, even as heretical doctrines arose. The quotation from *The Little Labyrinth*, depicts Zephyrinus as taking up the mantle of his forbears and preserving the doctrine of the church.[29]

This section of *The Little Labyrinth* has a specific heresy in mind: that which claimed that Christ was a "mere man" (ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον). Eusebius at first attributes this heresy to a certain Artemon, but this quotation from *The Little Labyrinth* connects the beginnings of this heresy to Theodotus, the cobbler.[30] Regardless of who was actually responsible for this heresy that called Christ ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον, *The Little Labyrinth* is clear that Victor unequivocally rejected it and that he even excommunicated Theodotus because of it.[31] *The Little Labyrinth's* statement about the corruption of the truth in the time of Zephyrinus lacks any sort of specificity; but given the context surrounding this statement, there is a good chance that this "corruption of the truth" had something to do with teaching about Christ.

In the next quotation of *The Little Labyrinth*, we learn about a certain Natalius who was persuaded by disciples of Theodotus the cobbler (who taught that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον) to become their bishop for a certain sum of money.[32] Eventually his guilt for accepting this illegitimate position got the better of him, and he repented before Zephyrinus. Despite his change of heart and penance, however, *The Little Labyrinth* tells us that he was either not readmitted to communion with the church or just barely taken back into communion.[33] This account of Zephyrinus from *The Little Labyrinth* contrasts sharply with what we learn of him in the *Refutatio*. The *Refutatio* portrays Zephyrinus as

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29   For a classic discussion of the episcopate of Victor and the state of the Roman church at the end of the second century, see George La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century: The Episcopate of Victor, the Latinization of the Roman Church, the Easter Controversy, Consolidation of Power and Doctrinal Development, the Catacomb of Callistus," *Harvard Theological Review* 18, no. 3 (1925): 201–277. La Piana's discussion is concerned primarily with ecclesiological questions and the growing authority of the Roman see. As a result, he does not focus on many of the doctrinal problems that are of interest here.

30   Theodoret does connect the teaching that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον with Artemon. See his *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 2.4 (PG 83.392).

31   Note again that Eusebius also accused the Ebionites of teaching that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον. Whether anything actually connects Artemon, Theodotus, and the Ebionites with each other is an open question; but Eusebius paints them as teaching the same thing about Christ.

32   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28.

33   Ibid.

a weak and servile man who is easily moved by the machinations of Callistus, but *The Little Labyrinth* presents him as someone who was very concerned with proper discipline in the church.[34] If nothing else, the testimony of *The Little Labyrinth* regarding Zephyrinus should make us even warier of the distorting tendencies of the *Refutatio*.[35]

Another episode in the *EH* merits our attention. Eusebius writes about Beryllus, who was bishop of Bostra in the time of Origen. He states that Beryllus "attempted to introduce things foreign to the faith, daring to say that our Saviour and Lord did not pre-exist in an individual existence of his own before his coming to reside among men, nor had he a divinity of his own, but only the Father's dwelling in him."[36] Concerned bishops then invited Origen to intervene in order to correct Berrylus. As Eusebius recounts it, Origen reasoned Beryllus back to "orthodoxy."[37] It is interesting to note that Eusebius here accuses Beryllus of something similar to his earlier charge against the Ebionites, namely, that he denied the pre-existence of the Son.[38]

Finally, and even though he post-dates Origen, Eusebius' treatment of Paul of Samosata in the *EH* is worth consideration because it illuminates some of the common threads that run through Eusebius' different accounts of errant views of Christ. Eusebius states that Paul "espoused low and mean views as to Christ, contrary to the Church's teaching, namely, that he was in his nature an ordinary man."[39] Eusebius earlier used the same word, ταπεινός, to describe the Ebionite views of Christ.[40] Furthermore, Eusebius describes both the Ebionites and Paul of Samosata of teaching that Christ was a common (κοινόν) man. In Eusebius'

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34 See, for example, *Refutatio* 9.7.

35 It is also interesting that *The Little Labyrinth* can speak of the truth being corrupted during the time of Zephyrinus while also showing him to be a firm disciplinarian.

36 Eusebius, *EH* 6.33 (trans. and Greek from Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 6–10*, trans. J.E.L. Oulton, Loeb Classical Library 265 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 86–87): … ξένα τινὰ τῆς πίστεως παρεισφέρειν ἐπειρᾶτο, τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ κύριον ἡμῶν λέγειν τολμῶν μὴ προϋφεστάναι κατʼ ἰδίαν οὐσίας περιγραφὴν πρὸ τῆς εἰς ἀνθρώπους ἐπιδημίας μηδὲ μὴν θεότητα ἰδίαν ἔχειν, ἀλλʼ ἐμπολιτευομένην αὐτῷ μόνην τὴν πατρικήν.

37 Eusebius' account here has many similarities with Origen's *Dialogue with Heraclides*. In both, Origen appears to have been summoned by bishops to function as something of a theological trouble-shooter. In both accounts, Origen also wins over the errant person with whom he is in dialogue. Eusebius himself introduces the vocabulary of "orthodoxy" here even though it was often difficult to sharply delineate what was orthodox and what was heterodox at the beginning of the third century.

38 For this discussion of the Ebionites, see Eusebius, *EH* 3.27.

39 Eusebius, *EH* 7.27 (trans. and Greek from LCL 265:209–211): τούτου δὲ ταπεινὰ καὶ χαμαιπετῆ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρὰ τὴν ἐκκλησιαστικὴν διδασκαλίαν φρονήσαντος ὡς κοινοῦ τὴν φύσιν ἀνθρώπου γενομένου.

40 Eusebius, *EH* 3.27.

descriptions of those who hold errant views of Christ, several terms recur: ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον, κοινὸν ἄνθρωπον, ταπεινός. Eusebius says that both the Ebionites and Artemon claimed that Christ was ψιλὸν ἄνθρωπον. Eusebius also accuses Paul of Samosata of trying to resurrect the heresy of Artemon. Eusebius clearly has Paul of Samosata in his sights during the composition of the EH, and there is little doubt that he intended to create some sort of heretical genealogy with the similarities we see in his account. The tendentious nature of Eusebius' account calls for caution when determining the value of his reports on the heresies that antedated Paul.

Neither Eusebius nor *The Little Labyrinth* gives us any details about the sort of monarchianism we see in *Contra Noetum*, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the *Refutatio*, or Novatian's *De Trinitate*. As I argue in what follows, the same impulse to preserve the uniqueness of God probably prompted both monarchianism and psilanthropism. Thus, although they do not mention monarchianism directly, Eusebius and *The Little Labyrinth* are helpful. As we see it in Eusebius and *The Little Labyrinth*, psilanthropism can be interpreted as an attempt to safeguard the uniqueness of God that traveled to Rome during the second century. Calling Christ a "mere man" and saying that he was filled by the power of God would certainly be ways of safeguarding this understanding of monotheism. Novatian's fixation on both psilanthropism and the later "modalistic" monarchianism shows that these were closely related. If nothing else, Eusebius' EH and *The Little Labyrinth* demonstrate that strong views of the uniqueness of God and of Christ's mere humanity were already a pressing issue in Rome by the time of Victor.

3   The Hippolytan Question

Before addressing either the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* or the *Contra Noetum*, two works often attributed to Hippolytus, it is necessary to outline the contours of the scholarly discussion about Hippolytus. The nature of the questions about Hippolytus and the texts attributed to him is such that it has a great bearing on how the works are treated. For example, very few scholars still argue that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are by the same author. If different authors wrote these two works, we should expect to see differences in style and theology. Questions of authorship regarding these two texts will in turn affect determinations we make about the relationship between Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* and *Contra Noetum*. In short, a thorough grasp of the debate about Hippolytus must necessarily precede any attempt to locate or analyze either the *Refutatio* or *Contra Noetum*. Accordingly, I here highlight the key

pieces of the scholarly debate and draw preliminary conclusions about the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*.[41]

The debate about Hippolytus extends far beyond the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*; but because they feature so prominently in the scholarly debate and represent its major contours, I will mostly limit my summary of the debate to pieces that deal with these works. Prior to the twentieth century, scholars commonly accepted that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* were both written by Hippolytus.[42] Since the beginning of the twentieth century, such a claim for common authorship has been problematized. There is a cloud of uncertainty surrounding both Hippolytus and many of the works ascribed to him. Scholars lack precise details about who Hippolytus was, which writings can be attributed to him with any degree of confidence, and the dating of both his life and the works attributed to him. Scholars have presented numerous theories attempting to make sense of the disparate pieces of data, but there are too many pieces of missing information for any theory to be plausible enough to gain widespread acceptance. Uncertainty is regnant regarding most questions related to Hippolytus.[43]

Eusebius first mentions Hippolytus as he is discussing church leaders who left written works to posterity. He refers to Hippolytus in passing as someone "who also presided over another church somewhere."[44] Even here, our uncertainty about Hippolytus is evident because Eusebius gives him no geographical epithet. A short while later, Eusebius provides us with a list of Hippolytus' works to which he has access. Among these, he includes the *Refutatio* or Πρὸς ἁπά- σας τὰς αἱρέσεις.[45] Although Eusebius does not mention the *Contra Noetum* in this list, he does say that there are many other works of Hippolytus that have been preserved by other people.[46] Eusebius' final reference to Hippolytus in

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41 Because questions about these two works are so intertwined, I have chosen to address them together rather than with an introduction to each of the specific works.

42 Harnack is a good example of this position. See Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 52–54, 62–63.

43 For a concise summary of the major trends and problems in Hippolytus research, see Ronald E. Heine, "Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus and the Early Canons," in *The Cambridge History of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frances M. Young, Lewis Ayres, and Andrew Louth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 142–151.

44 Eusebius, *EH* 6.20 (trans. LCL 265:65).

45 Eusebius, *EH* 6.22.

46 Scholars debate whether *Contra Noetum* should be viewed as an independent work or as a part of a larger whole. Those who argue that it is a fragment of a larger work usually assume that it was part of the *Syntagma* mentioned by Photius in *Bibliotheca*, codex 121. Pierre Nautin represents the scholarly trajectory that thinks *Contra Noetum* was the conclusion of the *Syntagma*. See his *Hippolyte et Josipe: Contribution à l'histoire de la littér-*

the *EH* comes during his discussion of Dionysius of Alexandria, where he says that Dionysius sent a letter to "those in Rome" and that the letter was delivered through Hippolytus (διὰ Ἱππολύτου).[47] This last reference, despite the earlier absence of a geographical epithet, does lend some credence to the common association of Hippolytus with the church in Rome.

Furthermore, a statue was discovered in Rome in 1551 near the tomb of a martyr named Hippolytus.[48] This statue contained both a calculation of dates for the Passover and a list of written works.[49] The similarity of the titles of the works on the statue with other lists of Hippolytus' writings, coupled with its location near the tomb of Hippolytus the martyr, led scholars to conclude that this statue depicted Hippolytus. Varying interpretations of the statue have been weighted heavily in the accounts of many scholars on the works of Hippolytus.[50]

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ature chrétienne du troisième siècle, Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1947), 100. Harnack also considered *Contra Noetum* to be the conclusion of the *Syntagma* (*History of Dogma*, 3:51–52, n. 1). Butterworth argues at length that *Contra Noetum* is an independent work and should not be considered a fragment dislocated from a larger whole. He argues that it is structured as an adaptation of profane diatribe and that this helps explain the structure, style, and content of the work. See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, ed. Robert Butterworth, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977), 118 ff. Manlio Simonetti accepts the conclusions of Butterworth and argues that *Contra Noetum* is an independent work ("Una nuova proposta su Ippolito," *Augustinianum* 36, no. 1 (1996): 40).

47   Eusebius, *EH* 6.46. Eusebius does not specify those to whom Dionysius sent the letter. He merely tells us that it was sent to "those in Rome" (τοῖς ἐν Ῥώμῃ).

48   See Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 17 ff.; Josef Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom: Ein Lösungsversuch; Die Schriften Elenchos und Contra Noëtum*, Grazer theologische Studien 13 (Graz: Eigenverlag des Instituts für Ökumenische Theologie und Patrologie an der Universität Graz, 1988), 65 ff.; Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 3–50; Heine, "Hippolytus, Ps.-Hippolytus and the Early Canons," 144.

49   For a good summary of the list of works on the statue, see Miroslav Marcovich, "Introduction," in *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, Patristische Texte und Studien 25 (New York; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986), 12–13.

50   For a number of reasons, Nautin doubted that Hippolytus was the author of numerous works attributed to him, especially the *Elenchos* or *Refutatio omnium haeresium*. Nautin, therefore, denied that the statue depicted Hippolytus. Nautin argued that the statue actually depcited a certain Josipe (or Josephus) and that this Josipe was the author of the Elenchos. See Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 79 ff. One of the chief means Nautin used to posit two authors, Hippolytus and Josipe, was that there were differences between chronological sections in works attributed to Hippolytus and the paschal calculations on the statue. Nautin thought it improbable that a single author would produce conflicting chronologies, and thus argued that there were two authors. More recently, John Behr, following

As noted above, the authorship and provenance of the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* have been hotly contested for most of the twentieth century.[51] The common view that Hippolytus was the author of both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* was forcefully challenged with the publication of Pierre Nautin's *Hippolyte et Josipe* in 1947.[52] At the beginning of the work, Nautin signaled

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Brent's conclusion argues that Hippolytus was not the author of the *Refutatio* and that it antedated the *Contra Noetum*, which was written by Hippolytus. John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, The Formation of Christian Theology 1 (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 141–142.

51   Nautin thinks the *Refutatio* is the product of "Josipe"; and he places it earlier than *Contra Noetum*, which he deems to be genuinely Hippolytan (*Hippolyte et Josipe*, 85–86). Marcel Richard notes that serious questions arise when we consider whether the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are by the same author. See his "Sainte Hippolyte, 'Hippolyte et Josipe': Bulletin de Patrologie," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 5 (1948): 297–298. Marcovich (1986) argues that the *Refutatio* is actually by Hippolytus and dates it between 222 and 235 ("Introduction," 16–17). Roberth Butterworth sees no reason to doubt that Hippolytus of Rome was the author of *Contra Noetum* ("Introduction," in *Contra Noetum*, Heythrop Monographs 2 [London: Heythrop College (University of London), 1977], i). In his 1988 monograph, Frickel argued that the *Refutatio* is legitimately by Hippolytus, as is *Contra Noetum*. His argument proceeds by comparing the demonstrations of truth at the end of *Contra Noetum* and *Refutatio*, 10. He builds on the work of Richard and argues strongly against Nautin. See Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*, 299. Caroline P. Bammel says of Frickel's monograph: "Frickel writes as an advocate rather than as an impartial umpire" ("The State of Play with Regard to Hippolytus and the Contra Noetum," *Heythrop Journal* 31, no. 2 [1990]: 195). Later, however, Frickel changed his position and suggested that *Contra Noetum* was not written by Hippolytus but was actually responding to fourth- and fifth-century problems. See Josef Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift Contra Noetum: Ein Pseudo-Hippolyt," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski, ed. Hans Christof Brennecke, Ernst Ludwig Grasmück, and Christoph Markschies, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 67* (*Berlin: de Gruyter, 1993*), 87–123. Reinhard M. Hübner adopts a similar position and argues that *Contra Noetum* is a product of the fourth century and is unreliable for establishing the theology of Noetus ("Melito von Sardes und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine: antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* [Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999], 4–9). Brent thinks the *Refutatio* was written by someone other than Hippolytus but that Hippolytus touched it up and used it as a source for composing *Contra Noetum*, which was an attempt at rapprochement with the semi-monarchianism of Callistus. (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 206, 211, 256–258). Nautin also argues that Trinitarian formulae in Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* are not treated as skeptically as those in *Contra Noetum*. Therefore, he sees no reason that the seemingly advanced Trinitarian theology in *Contra Noetum* would have to be considered a later interpolation. While his observation about the lack of skepticism regarding the pneumatological passages in *Adversus Praxean* is true, Nautin fails to consider whether Tertullian's Montanism influenced him to emphasize pneumatology. See, Nautin, 46–47.

52   Nautin clearly and somewhat polemically outlines the rise of the scholarly consensus

his intention to critically reevaluate the prevailing paradigm with the follow-ing statement about the *Refutatio*: "Modern criticism attributes this work to Hippolytus, but it presents such very profound divergences with a certainly authentic text of Hippolytus, the fragment *Contra Noetum*, that it was not possi-ble to avoid posing anew the question of its origin."[53] In this statement, Nautin shows two of his central propositions: (1) that there are substantial differences between the *Refutatio* and the *Contra Noetum*, and (2) that the *Contra Noetum* is a genuine and reliable work of Hippolytus.[54]

Nautin attempts to compare the works attributed to Hippolytus in four major areas to determine if they are genuinely Hippolytan: (1) doctrine, (2) genre, (3) formation of general spirit, (4) style.[55] After a detailed analysis, Nautin concludes that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are not by the same author. Since he had pre-determined that *Contra Noetum* was a genuinely Hip-

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regarding the Hippolytan authorship of both works. He pays particular attention to its rise in German scholarship before stating that "A. d' Alès vulgarisait définitivement en France la thèse allemande" (34). For this narration, see Ibid., 17–35.

53   Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 7. Translation mine. "La critique moderne attribue cet ouvrage à Hippolyte; mais il présente des divergences si profondes avec un texte certainement authentique d' Hippolyte, le fragment contre Noët, que l' on ne pouvait éviter de poser à nouveau la question de son origine." Note that Nautin and other scholars prefer to call the *Refutatio* the *Elenchos*. Still others refer to it as the *Philosophoumena*. While any of these titles is appropriate, I will use *Refutatio* for the sake of consistency.

54   Nautin states that one of the reasons he considers *Contra Noetum* to be genuinely Hip-polytan is that it is attributed to him by the fifth-century authors Gelasius and Theodoret (ibid., 35). As I will note later, several scholars have questioned the Hippolytan authorship of *Contra Noetum*. Nautin notes that some earlier scholars had viewed the seemingly well-developed pnematological passages in *Contra Noetum* as later interpolations, but Nautin dismisses these critiques. He claims that these pnematological sections are so tightly inter-woven into the fabric of the work that it is highly improbable that they are interpolations. Furthermore, Nautin accepts Photius' assertion that Hippolytus was a student of Irenaeus and claims that such pneumatology as we see in *Contra Noetum* was already present in the earlier works of Irenaeus (ibid., 37–42). One of the similarities Nautin claims to see between Irenaeus and Hippolytus is that they both identify the Holy Spirit as Wisdom. Nautin is correct to note that Irenaeus identifies the Holy Spirit and Wisdom, but he is quite mistaken with regard to the *Contra Noetum*. The passage from *Contra Noetum* 10 that Nautin cites to support his position is not about the Holy Spirit, but rather the Son. See ibid., 44. What we see in *Contra Noetum* 10, then, is nothing more than the standard early third-century connection of the creative functions of the Son with those of Wisdom. Brent also notes this erroneous assertion of Nautin (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 533 n. 126).

55   Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 48. By "formation of general spirit" (formation d' esprit gén-érale) Nautin seems to mean something like the intellectual horizon of each author. For example, he thinks that the divergence in usage of scripture between the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* "révèle déjà deux esprits de formations très différentes" (ibid., 51).

polytan work, he needed to posit a different author for the *Refutatio*. Eventually, he settled on a certain "Josipe" as the author of the *Refutatio*.[56] Nautin further suggests that the *Refutatio* was the earlier of the two works and that Hippolytus drew on it when he composed *Contra Noetum*.[57] Despite some of the highly speculative or tendentious conclusions Nautin came to, his work catapulted questions about Hippolytus back into the scholarly consciousness.[58] His work was a substantial challenge to the prevailing views at the time.

The publication of Nautin's monograph touched off a controversy among French scholars that lasted for nearly a decade.[59] Gustave Bardy quickly responded to Nautin's thesis with acerbic criticism and argued for common Hippolytan authorship.[60] Shortly following Bardy's harsh critique of Nautin's thesis, Marcel Richard began a series of articles in which he disputed the conclusions Nautin drew from the chronological inconsistencies. Richard argued that such inconsistencies do not necessarily lead one to conclude that there were two different authors. Indeed, Richard argued that Hippolytus was the author

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56   Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 88.

57   Ibid., 56–58. One of the chief reasons Nautin gives for believing that the *Refutatio* is earlier is that it has no mention of the condemnation of Noetus. *Contra Noetum*, on the other hand, does have an account of Noetus' condemnation. Since Nautin assumes that there is some dependence between the works, he finds it very implausible that the "Josipe" would not have included details about the condemnation of Noetus if he had been aware of them. Thus, for Nautin, it makes sense that *Contra Noetum* was later. This whole argument about which of the works was earlier, however, begs the question about dependence. Was there actually direct dependence between the works? If there was, is Nautin's dating scheme the only way to explain the absence of Noetus' condemnation in the *Refutatio*?

58   Nautin's work is tendentious in that he exhibits a marked preference for Hippolytus. He views "Josipe" as a pretentious dilettante, while he claims that Hippolytus was a pious man of the church. The following is a good example of his estimation of the two: "Hippolyte et Josipe représentent ainsi deux types d'esprit très différents, et l'on ne peut s'empêcher de comparer l'impression qu'ils nous laissent après bientôt deux millénaires. L'oeuvre de Josipe nous apparaît bien vieille, à cause de l'érudition périmée qui l'encombre. Quand nous lisons aujourd'hui ses développements copieux sur la physique de la création ou sur la description de l'Hadès, nous trouvons que l'"amour de la science", dont il se vantait, l'a entraîné à beaucoup de puérilité. La sobriété d'Hippolyte dans les mêmes matières relève d'une intelligence religieuse plus pénétrante et incontestablement plus proche de l'esprit moderne. C'est à son esprit ecclésiastique, qu'il nous faut accepter d'en savoir gré. Parce qu'Hippolyte n'a pas voulu d'autre science que celle des 'saintes Écritures', son oeuvre reste vivante pour nous" (*Hippolyte et Josipe*, 103).

59   Butterworth gives a competent summary of the whole controversy, although it precedes the substantial contributions made by the Italian school in the late 1970s. See Robert Butterworth, "The Growth of the Problem," in *Contra Noetum*, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College (University of London), 1977), 1–33.

60   Gustave Bardy, "L'énigme d'Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 5, no. 1 (1948): 63–88.

of the works Nautin divided between Hippolytus and Josipe, although he was willing to admit that there were interpolations in the extant texts.[61]

An Italian school of scholars devoted substantial attention to the Hippolytan question beginning in the 1970s and held two coferences devoted to Hippolytus. They generally accepted Nautin's fundamental thesis that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* were not composed by the same author.[62] Josef Frickel, who participated in both of the Italian conferences, maintained the common Hippolytan authorship of the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*.[63] In 1993, however, Frickel revised his position and argued that *Contra Noetum* was actually not by Hippolytus.[64]

Since Frickel's change of position in 1993, the majority of scholars have rejected the older view that both texts were composed by Hippolytus of Rome.[65] Brent's more recent proposal accepts that Hippolytus was not the author of both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*; but he innovatively, if not convincingly, argues that there was a Hippolytan school operative in Rome.[66] These scholarly arguments about Hippolytus have ranged widely, drawing upon both archaeological evidence and the written works attributed to Hippolytus. Scholars have clearly shown that there are substantial theological differences between the extant works, especially between the theological positions favored by one or another work.[67]

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61   For Richard's response to Nautin, see Richard, "Sainte Hippolyte, 'Hippolyte et Josipe': Bulletin de Patrologie"; idem, "Comput et chronographie chez Saint Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 7 (1950): 237–268; idem, "Comput et chronographie chez Saint Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 8 (1951): 19–51; idem, "Encore le problème d' Hippolyte," *Mélanges de science religieuse* 10 (1953): 13–52; idem, "Dernières remarques sur s. Hippolyte et le soi-disant Josipe," *Recherches de science religieuse* 43 (1955): 379–394.

62   See the two volumes of conference proceedings, and especially the essays of Simonetti and Loi. *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977); *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 30 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1989).

63   Josef Frickel, "Contraddizioni nelle opere e nella persona di Ippolito di Roma," in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977), 137–149; idem, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*; idem, "Ippolito di Roma, scrittore e martire," in *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 30 (Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1989), 23–41.

64   Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift Contra Noetum: ein Pseudo-Hippolyt."

65   Hübner thinks that *Contra Noetum* was written in the fourth century and is fundamentally unreliable for the reconstruction of Noetus' teaching ("Melito und Noët," 1999, 4–9).

66   Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*.

67   I am referring to places where the authors go beyond refuting their opponents and lay out their own positions. For example, Frickel's earlier argument examines the positions endorsed in the "demonstrations of truth" in *Refutatio* x and *Contra Noetum* (*Das Dunkel*

One of the most recent detailed treatments of the Hippolytan question is that of J.A. Cerrato.[68] Cerrato notes at the outset of his work that he is critical of the traditional Roman hypothesis, namely, that all the works commonly ascribed to Hippolytus were penned by a Roman bishop named Hippolytus. Cerrato notes that the majority of studies from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries focused on the relationship between the controversial works: the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*. His study breaks new ground because he concentrates his analysis on the biblical commentaries ascribed to Hippolytus.[69] He argues that the overwhelming majority of biblical commentaries of the same style as those ascribed to Hippolytus were produced in the East; there is little literary evidence for this commentary tradition in Rome. Furthermore, Cerrato sees enough similarities between these (most likely) eastern commentaries and *Contra Noetum* to argue that they were by the same author. The same cannot be said of the *Refutatio*. Although Cerrato does not spend much time discussing the dating of *Contra Noetum*, the fact that he lumps it with the eastern biblical commentaries suggests a date at the beginning of the third century.

The scholarly opinion that the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are not both the product of Hippolytus' pen has grown increasingly strong since the publication of Nautin's monograph in the 1940s. Indeed, nearly all scholars have abandoned attempts to show that Hippolytus wrote both texts.[70] Accordingly, my treatment of these two works begins with the well-founded assumption that they were not written by the same author. Although traditional claims about Hippolytan authorship have fallen out of favor, these texts still prove to be worthwhile sources for the reconstruction of the monarchian controversy. Both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* were concerned with refuting monarchian teaching; and if Heine's thesis is correct, these two texts provide a lens into how

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um Hippolyt von Rom). On the basis of this study, though, Frickel argues that the two works were written by the same author. His argument countered the multiple-authors hypothesis that was becoming dominant.

68   J.A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

69   Ibid., 82: "Throughout the literary controversy between Nautin and his critics the emphasis remained on the anti-heretical works, especially the *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio*. This had been the focus of the nineteenth century. It was the original point of attack against the Roman hypothesis and, therefore, the centre of defence by advocates of the western provenance view. The evidences for the eastern character of the commentaries, perhaps the most positive and persuasive data in the debate were not brought to the forefront of the discussion."

70   Mansfeld notes, however, that he finds Frickel's argument that they are by the same author mostly convincing. See Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' Elenchos as a Source for Greek Philosophy*, Philosophia Antiqua 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 317.

monarchianism developed over a period of about thirty years (from ca. 200 to ca. 230).[71] Even though they are probably by different authors and there are stylistic differences between the two, the texts can still be used to create a more substantial and coherent picture of the monarchian teachings. Regarding stylistic differences, I am thinking specifically of the way the accounts of monarchian teaching are organized. In the *Refutatio*, few scriptural references are used when laying out the positions of Callistus et al. In *Contra Noetum*, however, the work is structured around biblical quotations, monarchian interpretation of those verses, and then a rebuttal of their interpretation.

4   Hippolytus: *Contra Noetum*

4.1   *Introduction*

As the summary of disparate positions regarding the works of Hippolytus above demonstrates, scholars are divided regarding the date of *Contra Noetum*. Despite the difficulties of dating the work, determinations about its date remain quite important. Nearly all scholars agree that there is a relationship of dependence between *Contra Noetum* and Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*.[72] Narrowing the date of *Contra Noetum* helps us determine the directionality of that dependence. Furthermore, an accurate dating of the work allows us to make determinations about any developments within monarchian theology. Even with the uncertainty about dating, *Contra Noetum* contains snippets of simple and early monarchian teachings that help lay bare some of the core monarchian commitments.

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71   Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 78. Heine argues that *Contra Noetum* bears witness to an earlier form of Monarchianism wherein patripassian assertions were not viewed as problematic. The *Refutatio*, on the other hand, shows a more developed form of Monarchianism that sought to distance itself from the difficult patripassian claims of earlier forms of Monarchianism. If Mouraviev is correct, the development of Monarchian teaching is even visible in the different reports on Noetian teaching in the *Refutatio*. See Serge N. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët (Commentaire d'Hippolyte, Refut. omn. haer. IX 8–10)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, vol. 2.36.6, 1992, 4375–4402.

72   One of the main reasons scholars think that there is some sort of dependence between the two works is that they both deploy a similar understanding of "economy" against the monarchians. I detail the theories about dependence in the following discussion. One notable exception to this is Michael Decker, who thinks that the two works were composed independently. See his "Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987), 49.

Nautin and Brent both take *Contra Noetum* to be a genuine work of Hippolytus, and both place its composition after the *Refutatio*. In Brent's scheme, the date of the work is sometime after 225 C.E.[73] Frickel disagreed with the conclusions of Nautin and proposed that *Contra Noetum* preceded the *Refutatio*.[74] Specifically, he dated *Contra Noetum* before 217 and the *Refutatio* around 235.[75] Later, he changed his position and argued that *Contra Noetum* had undergone substantial redaction.[76] Simonetti has forcefully and repeatedly rejected the claims of Nautin and Brent that *Contra Noetum* is later than the *Refutatio*.[77] He contends that *Contra Noetum* was written in the late second century or early third and that it antedates Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*.[78] On the whole, I find Simonetti's arguments regarding the early dating of *Contra Noetum* to be more compelling than those who argue it was composed after the *Refutatio*.[79]

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[73] See Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 85–86; Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 529. Brent is fully aware that his proposal contradicts the positions of the Italian school. He directly engages Simonetti in this section, stating, "We shall argue therefore that though Tertullian is dependent upon the theology of El., C.N. is in fact dependent upon Tertullian. We shall show that where Simonetti claims Tertullian develops, it is in fact C.N. which shortens and omits in order to depersonalize the pre-existent λόγος and thus forge a rapprochement with Monarchianism, which would have regarded a personal pre-existent λόγος as part of a ditheism or tritheism" (529).

[74] Frickel, *Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*, 204–210. For an explicit rejection of Nautin's proposal, see 208, n. 628.

[75] Ibid., 299.

[76] Frickel, "Hippolyts Schrift Contra Noetum: Ein Pseudo-Hippolyt."

[77] See especially Simonetti, "Una nuova proposta su Ippolito," 29–31. Here Simonetti explicitly engages with Brent's work and rejects his conclusions. Although Simonetti rejects many of the details of Brent's argument, he is not fundamentally opposed to Brent's core thesis that there was a Hippolytan school. For a protracted discussion of the relationship between *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*, see Manlio Simonetti, "Due note su Ippolito: Ippolito interprete di Genesi 49; Ippolito e Tertulliano," in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977), 121–136.

[78] Simonetti, "Due note su Ippolito," 136.

[79] Although the subject is beyond the scope of this current section, many scholars have observed that the Pneumatology in *Contra Noetum* seems to be rather developed if the document is from the early third century. Despite the rigorous debate, no consensus has been reached. Nautin thinks the Pneumatology is intelligible coming from Hippolytus and does not see the need to posit later interpolations (*Hippolyte et Josipe*, 36–47). Richard disagreed with Nautin and thought that the Holy Spirit passages were perhaps an indication that the entire work was later. See, for example, Richard, "Sainte Hippolyte, 'Hippolyte et Josipe': Bulletin de Patrologie," 298. Reinhard Hübner accepted Richard's theory and viewed *Contra Noetum* as a product of the fourth century and as completely unreliable for the reconstruction of Noetus' thought. See two of his discussions: *Der Paradox Eine*, viii; "Die antignostische Glaubensregel des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 39.

The argument for an early dating of *Contra Noetum* is further strengthened by Heine's contention that the straightforward patripassianism of *Contra Noetum* represents an earlier strain of Asian monarchianism.[80] Thus, I will proceed from the assumption that *Contra Noetum* is the earliest extant witness that we possess to monarchian teachings. Furthermore, this conclusion leads me to consider Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* to have been at least partially dependent upon *Contra Noetum*.[81]

4.2   *Textual Analysis*

Contra Noetum begins with a condensed representation of the most troublesome aspects of the Noetians' teaching and offers some limited biographical background about Noetus. We learn that he was from Smyrna and that he lived not long before the author of *Contra Noetum*.[82] Next, we are informed that Noetus had friction with "the elders" and was eventually condemned.[83] If we

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Although Hübner thinks that *Contra Noetum* is a late work, he repeatedly claims that Noetus himself was an early figure and that Ignatius, Irenaeus, Melito, and others drew on this theology. I will discuss his theory in more detail in my section on the *Refutatio*, but suffice it to say that I find it unconvincing. Note also Mark Edwards' negative appraisal of Hübner's main thesis: M.J. Edwards, "Review of Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im Zweiten Jahrhundert," *Journal of Theological Studies* 52, no. 1 (2001): 354–356. In his earlier works, Frickel did not think that these pneumatological passages were later interpolations and noted that such Trinitarian formulations can be found in the earlier work of Irenaeus (*Das Dunkel um Hippolyt von Rom*, 254–255).

80   Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 89. Note also Mouraviev's discussion of the possible development of Noetus' teaching by his successors: Serge N. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët (Commentaire d'Hippolyte, Refut. omn. haer. IX 8–10)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, vol. 2.36.6, 1992, 4375–4402. Especially helpful are his two charts that map out the main areas of development within Noetian theology on pp. 4385–4386.

81   As should be abundantly clear, these conclusions about dating and dependence are quite tentative. Although I find the arguments of the Italian school most convincing, the conclusions of Brent et al. are not without merit. Even more, my reconstruction that follows does not rest on a certain order of texts or dependence between them. Given the way texts traveled geographically, an earlier date does not necessarily mean that a later text was dependent on it.

82   *Contra Noetum* 1.1. Unless otherwise noted, the Greek for *Contra Noetum* is taken from Butterworth's edition. Because the section numbers are the most specific reference, I will not include the page number from Butterworth.

83   *Contra Noetum* 1.4; 1.6–7. It seems as though Noetus had multiple run-ins with the elders. In 1.3, Hippolytus mentions one condemnation and in 1.6 speaks of Noetus being called in again by the elders. Hippolytus' tone in this section is far from friendly, and it is possible that this account is unreliable. However, such actions by *presbyteroi* fall in line with what we see in Origen's *Dialogue with Heraclides* and the episode with Beryllus in Euse-

can trust Hippolytus' account, Noetus opened his own *didaskaleion* in response to the condemnation of the elders.[84] Hippolytus gives us further information about Noetus' teaching and the response of the elders to him, but Noetus himself does not appear to be Hippolytus' main target.[85] Hippolytus' invective is directed against the disciples of Noetus.[86] When he provides the details of the teaching he is opposing, he presents it not as the teaching of Noetus but as the teaching of his disciples.[87] Noetus is the villainized heresiarch who quickly fades into the background as Hippolytus addresses the teachings of his disciples, who were most likely the contemporaries of Hippolytus.

4.2.1 One God

After this introduction, Hippolytus begins his exposé of the Noetians' teaching before rebutting it point by point. From the outset, it becomes clear that the Noetian teaching was firmly rooted in scriptural exegesis.[88] The first texts presented are all adduced by the Noetians in order to support their foundational claim that there is only one God. As the analysis continues, it will become clear that theirs was a particularly rigid interpretation of the claim that there is only one God.[89]

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bius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.33. Scholars who argue that *Contra Noetum* post-dated the *Refutatio* often fixate on these details about the condemnation of Noetus. They claim that if the author of the *Refutatio* had known these details, he would have included them. The absence of the condemnation in the *Refutatio* signals to them that *Contra Noetum* had not yet been written. For a representative expression of this line of reasoning, see Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*, 57–59.

84 *Contra Noetum* 1.8.

85 Hippolytus gives us a digest of his teaching in 1.2: "He said that Christ himself was the Father, and that the Father himself had been born and had suffered and had died." (trans. Butterworth, 42 with my modifications). Both Hippolytus' digest of Noetus' teachings and the response of the elders to Noetus are important for reconstructing the positions of the Noetians. I will offer a fuller treatment of them as I develop the major themes of the Noetian teaching.

86 *Contra Noetum* 1.1: Ἕτεροί τινες ... τινος Νοητοῦ μαθηταί.

87 *Contra Noetum* 2.1. οἳ καὶ δεῖξαι βούλονται σύστασιν τῷ δόγματι λέγοντες ... The οἳ here is referring to the Ἕτεροί τινες ... τινος Νοητοῦ μαθηταί with which the work opens.

88 This will be important to note in our later discussion of the *Refutatio*, which expurgates almost all scriptural references when it reports on the teachings of key monarchians. As I observe in my later discussions of the *Refutatio*, scholars have recognized that this was a result of the polemical tendency of the author. Decker argues that the scriptural quotations were not actually used by the Noetians and that they were inserted by Hippolytus to be fodder for his exegetical rebuttal. Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156–157. Given the prominence of biblical exegesis in every account of monarchianism except the *Refutatio*, Decker's theory lacks textual support.

89 Remember that this rigid interpretation of the uniqueness of God is what I take to be the

Hippolytus' account has them combining Gen. 46:3 (or Ex. 3:6) with Ex. 20:3 to affirm that there is only one God: Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν· οὐκ ἔσονται ὑμῖν θεοὶ ἔτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ.[90] These two conjoined texts precede a rough paraphrase of Isa. 44:6: Ἐγώ, φησίν, πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ ἔσχατος καὶ μετ᾽ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐστιν οὐδείς.[91] Immediately following his presentation of these Noetian prooftexts, Hippolytus states that "this is the way they are claiming to establish a single God" (οὕτω φάσκουσιν συνιστᾶν ἔνα Θεόν).[92] Given the centrality of this claim to their teaching, the Noetians almost certainly had more proof texts in their dossier to prove that there is only one God. Nevertheless, Hippolytus reproduces enough of their argument to make it clear that their first step was to argue that there is only one God and that passages from the Old Testament were critical pieces of their exegetical argument.[93]

The Noetian fixation on the claim that there is only one God is evidenced in numerous other places in *Contra Noetum*. It is clear that the Noetians accused Hippolytus (and probably the elders also) of being ditheists. Hippolytus twice clarifies his own claims in order to state that he does not teach that there are two Gods.[94] The response of the elders to Noetus in the introduction is particularly telling in this regard. They state, "We too have knowledge of a single God—in the true way" (Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἔνα Θεὸν οἴδαμεν ἀληθῶς).[95] It was necessary for them to restate that they believed in one God precisely because Noetus and his followers accused them of being ditheists.

The centrality of the Noetians' concern with the oneness of God is again on display as Hippolytus begins his demonstration of the truth. He starts as follows, "There is one God, and we acquire knowledge of him from no other source, brethren, than the Holy Scriptures."[96] Hippolytus' choice to start his

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common denominator of the different expressions of monarchianism and some forms of psilanthropism. Although they diverge about the best way to protect monotheism, the impulse to preserve a strong form of it motivated each of their theologies.

90   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.1. These quotations are nearly verbatim from the LXX. In the LXX of both of the verses, the second person pronouns are singular. Butterworth identifies the first quotation as Ex. 3:6, but it is actually closer to Gen. 46:3.

91   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.2. Again, this is not an exact quotation of the LXX.

92   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.3. (trans. Butterworth, 44).

93   Mouraviev also identifies the assertion that there is only one God as the first postulate of the Noetian system. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët," 4379.

94   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1, 14.2–3. That the monarchians charged their opponents with being ditheists is well attested in the extant literature. I will highlight occurrences of this charge in the discussions of the other primary sources. The charge appears twice in the *Refutatio*.

95   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.7 (trans. Butterworth, 44).

96   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 9.1 (trans. Butterworth, 66): εἷς Θεός, ὃν οὐκ ἄλλοθεν ἐπιγινώσκομεν, ἀδελφοί, ἢ τῶν ἁγίων γραφῶν.

demonstration of truth this way is indicative of two prominent features of his conflict with the Noetians: (1) it focused on the proper understanding of monotheism, and (2) the conflict was thoroughly exegetical.[97] This emphasis on the proper understanding of monotheism is further borne out by the way in which Hippolytus refutes the Noetian claims before his demonstration of truth: "After all, would not everyone say that there is a single God?—but it is not everyone who would scrap the economy."[98] For Hippolytus, the question is not whether there is one God; everyone believes this. The question is how to interpret the statement that there is only one God. Hippolytus follows his commitment to monotheism by outlining his exegetical task against the Noetians: "So really, in view of all of this, the first of our two tasks must be to refute our opponents' understanding of the passages quoted, and to show what they mean in the light of the truth."[99] Again, the dual emphasis on monotheism and scriptural exegesis shows that both Hippolytus and the Noetians saw the question of monotheism as one best resolved through scriptural exegesis.[100]

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97   Again, contra Decker's thesis, Hippolytus' conflict with the Noetians was thoroughly exegetical. He complains numerous times about the bad exegetical practices of his opponents. See *Contra Noetum* 2.4, 3.1, 4.2, 9.3.

98   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.4 (trans. Butterworth, 48): τίς γὰρ οὐκ ἐρεῖ ἕνα Θεὸν εἶναι; ἀλλ᾿ οὐ τὴν οἰκονομίαν ἀναιρήσει. Hippolytus' use of economy is quite important, and I will discuss it later. Note also that economy is an important term in Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, and the role of the term in both *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* is one of the primary reasons that scholars think there is a relationship of dependence between the two works.

99   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.5 (trans. Butterworth, 48): ὄντως μὲν οὖν τὰ κεφάλαια διὰ ταῦτα πρότερον δεῖ ἀνατραπῆναι κατὰ τὸν ἐκείνων νοῦν· κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀλήθειαν δειχθῆναι. This passage particularly tells against Decker's claim that the Noetian exegesis is the invention of Hippolytus. If Hippolytus did invent the exegesis, this passage shows how far he was willing to extend his ruse.

100 It is very interesting to note that Hippolytus links the exegetical tendencies of the Noetians with those of Theodotus. He states, "And in this way they themselves, too, wish to explain these individual verses—using them in the way that Theodotus spoke in his attempt to establish that [Christ] was a mere man" (*Contra Noetum* 3.1 [trans. Butterworth, 48]). Therefore, it is very likely that psilanthropism and monarchianism were both responses to the same problem. Unfortunately, we do not have access to texts that preserve the exegetical proclivities of Theodotus and other second-century psilanthropists. Access to Theodotus' exegesis of these passages could help us fill in details about the distinct ways these exegetes sought to defend monotheism. Hippolytus and Eusebius both accuse Theodotus of teaching the same thing: that Christ was ἄνθρωπον ψιλόν.

4.2.2   Visible

From this bedrock assertion that there is only one God, the Noetians moved to address passages wherein God is said to have been visible to humans. Oddly absent from the texts they marshal in support of their argument are *loci classici* such as the episode of the burning bush (Ex. 3) or the Sinai theophany (Ex. 19:16–25). It is not surprising that the next step of the Noetians' argument was to address the visibility of God. By the late second century, it was an exegetical commonplace to identify the one manifest in the theophanies as the *Logos*.[101] This interpretation of the theophanies was driven by an attempt both to affirm the invisibility of God the Father (cf. Ex. 33:20) and to maintain that God did appear in the theophanies. The argument that it was the divine *Logos* who was seen in these manifestations allowed interpreters to uphold both claims. Justin Martyr is an early and strong example of this exegetical trend.[102] Because the Noetians had a strong reaction against anything they deemed to contradict a rigorous understanding of the uniqueness of God, this exegetical avenue was unpalatable.

Rejecting the prevailing interpretation of the OT theophanies, the Noetians argued that it was the one God who became visible in history. As noted earlier, Hippolytus' account has the Noetians sustaining their argument without reference to the classic OT theophanies. Perhaps they avoided these passages because they were precisely the ones used by those who argued that the *Logos* was present in the theophanies.[103] The first passage the Noetians use to argue about the visibility of God is Baruch 3:36–38.[104] They appear to have chosen this passage because it begins with an affirmation of the incomparability of God (a statement of God's uniqueness) before proceeding to speak of God becoming visible to humans. In the Noetian exegesis, we have here a clear example of the one God becoming visible in human history. Hippolytus records

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101   See Bogdan G. Bucur's recent article on the importance of the interpretation of theophanies in the second century: "Justin Martyr's Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies and the Parting of the Ways between Christianity and Judaism," *Theological Studies* 75, no. 1 (2014): 34–91.

102   See especially Justin Martyr, *1 Apology* 63.

103   Again, see Justin, *1 Apology* 63, where he uses Ex. 3:6 as a major example.

104   On the use of Baruch 3:36, see Elena Cavalcanti, "Osservazioni sull'uso patristico di Baruch 3, 36–38," in *Mémorial Dom Jean Gribomont (1920–1986)*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 27 (Roma: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum," 1988), 145–165; Reinhard M. Hübner, "Der antivalentinianische Charakter der Theologie des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 117–119; idem, "Εἷς θεὸς Ἰησοῦς Χριστός," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 228–229. Cavalcanti is more concerned with later use of this verse but still has some helpful background.

Noetus as interpreting this passage as follows: "So you see … that this is the God who is one alone, and who subsequently was seen and conversed with men."[105]

Following the exposition of Baruch 3:36–38, Hippolytus presents the Noetian interpretation of Isa. 45:14–15. This passage seems to have been chosen by the Noetians for the same reasons as the passage from Baruch. Like the Baruch passage, this passage contains an affirmation of the oneness of God (ἐροῦσιν Οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς πλὴν σοῦ) and the presence and manifestation of God among humans (ὅτι ἐν σοὶ ὁ θεός ἐστιν). Hippolytus again gives Noetus' interpretation of the passage: "the scriptures proclaim one God—the one who is visibly revealed."[106]

The Noetian combination of affirmations about the oneness of God with affirmations about the same God's visibility is no mistake. In the late second century, OT theophanies were often interpreted as an example of the place of the *Logos* alongside the Father, even if the specifics of the divinity of the *Logos* and the relationship of the *Logos* to the Father had not yet been worked out with the precision that would come in later centuries. By addressing together God's oneness and visibility, the Noetians were offering an alternative exegesis to the dominant one which saw the *Logos* in the theophanies.

From these two exegetical movements, the main thrust of the Noetian argument becomes exceedingly clear. According to Hippolytus, their central claim is, without a doubt, that there is only one God. Furthermore, their linkage of this affirmation to assertions about the visibility of God demonstrates that they considered exegesis that saw the *Logos* in the theophanies as a direct contradiction of the assertion of the oneness of God. Thus, in the Noetian exegesis presented by Hippolytus, the Noetians offer the *sine qua non* of their theology: the oneness of God. They follow this claim by offering exegesis of passages dealing with the visibility of God, for it is the frequent exegesis of these passages that they deem to be a critical threat to the oneness of God. Hippolytus records other passages that the Noetians used to support their arguments, but these passages are largely used to work out the implications of the particularly rigorous understanding of the oneness of God to which the Noetians adhered. I address exegesis of these passages in the following thematic analysis of Noetian teaching.

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105   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.5. (trans. Butterworth, 46): Ὁρᾷς οὖν, φησίν, ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ὁ μόνος ὢν καὶ ὕστερον ὀφθεὶς καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις συνανεστραφείς.

106   Hippolytus, Contra Noetum 2.6. (trans. Butterworth, 46): ἕνα θεὸν κηρύσσουσιν αἱ γραφαί, τούτου ἐμφανοῦς δεικνυμένου.

4.2.3   Both Father and Son

The next salient characteristic of the Noetian system is the stark identifi-
cation of the Father and the Son. This assertion appears repeatedly in the
first few chapters of *Contra Noetum*. Hippolytus reports that the Noetians
retorted to questions about maintaining one God as follows, "If, therefore,
I confess Christ as God, then he himself is the Father, if in fact he is God.
But Christ himself, being God, suffered. Therefore, did not the Father suffer?
For he himself was the Father."[107] I will address the patripassianism of this
passage later; but for now, there are several other interesting features to con-
sider.

The first notable thing about this statement is the tag on the end of the first
sentence: "if in fact he is God at all."[108] If this statement actually comes from
the Noetians, it lends support to the hypothesis that monarchianism and psi-
lanthropism were closely related. This quip implies that one way to deal with
the trouble of maintaining monotheism is to deny the divinity of Christ. This
is not the path the Noetians chose, but they seem to have been aware of it as a
live option.

The psilanthropists did not need to identify the Father and the Son because
they felt no compulsion to maintain the divinity of the Son. The Noetians, on
the other hand, accepted the divinity of Christ as a fundamental premise ("But
Christ himself, being God"). Their acceptance of Christ's divinity then fed into
their logic of monotheism: if Christ is God and the Father is God, then Christ
must be the Father.[109] Hippolytus then gives us another Noetian excerpt: "You
see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite
shamelessly, 'The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself
was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!' "[110] This is another
straightforward statement that the Father and the Son are the same.

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107   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.3. Translation mine. Εἰ οὖν Χριστὸν ὁμολογῶ Θεόν, αὐτὸς ἄρα
        ἐστὶν ὁ Πατήρ, εἰ γάρ ἐστιν ὁ Θεός. ἔπαθεν δὲ Χριστὸς αὐτὸς ὢν Θεός. ἆρα οὖν ἔπαθεν Πατήρ;
        ⟨Πατὴρ⟩ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν.

108   It is difficult to tell if this is an actual quotation or if this is merely Hippolytus' reproduc-
        tion of their position. If this is not an actual quotation, we must be wary of any polemical
        interpolations Hippolytus might have made.

109   Note that this is precisely what Evans is getting at in his discussion of the logic at work in
        monarchianism ("Introduction," 8).

110   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.2 (trans. Butterworth, 48): ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοί, πῶς προαλὲς καὶ
        τολμηρὸν δόγμα παρεισήνεγκαν ἀναισχύντως λέγοντες, Αὐτός ἐστι Χριστὸς ὁ Πατήρ, αὐτὸς Υἱός,
        αὐτὸς ἐγεννήθη, αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν, αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἤγειρεν. Note the importance the pronoun αὐτός
        has in these statements. This use of the pronoun features prominently in all of the extant
        accounts of monarchianism. Butterworth is not always consistent with his translations of

Although it seems as though the Noetians could have arrived at this identification of the Father and Son purely by means of the logic of the restrictive understanding of the oneness of God, they nonetheless bolstered their claim by means of scriptural exegesis, as we should expect by now. In order to do so, the Noetians appear to have used the two passages that recur in later stages of the monarchian controversy: Jn 10:30 and Jn. 14:8–10. Hippolytus does not give us direct quotations from the Noetians regarding these passages, but he presents the use of them somewhat hypothetically (ἐὰν δὲ λέγῃ). Hippolytus writes, "And if he were to say, 'He himself said: "I and the Father are one"' (Jn 10, 30), let him apply his mind to the matter and learn that he did not say, 'I and the Father *am* one', but '*are* one'. 'We are' is not said with reference to the one, but with reference to the two. He revealed two persons, but a single power."[111]

The Noetians supplemented their exegesis of John 10:30 with exegesis of John 14:8–10. Hippolytus writes,

> But supposing they were to try also to quote the fact that Philip asked about the Father: 'Show us the Father and we shall be satisfied' (Jn 14, 8); and the Lord answered him with the words: 'Have I been with you so long, Philip, and yet you do not know me? He who has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and

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αὐτός. Sometimes he translates it as "in person." I prefer in these cases to translate it as "himself" because I think it captures the thrust of the monarchian doctrine a bit better. The use of αὐτός here could also be translated as "the same," which I still prefer to Butterworth's translation. Where Butterworth uses "in person" or something similar, I have tried to modify the translation to reflect this preference. Also worth noting is the seeming redundancy in this statement: "The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son." While we could have here nothing more than repetition, it could also reflect a technical usage of the terms Christ and Son. Note here Heine and Loofs' observation that the monarchians almost always used Son to refer to the historical Jesus (Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 71; Friedrich Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th ed. [Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1906], 188). If this usage is in play here, we could be seeing the monarchians' way of identifying the Father with the incorporeal, heavenly Son of their opponents as well as with the incarnate Son. The repetition of αὐτός could also be a subtle reaction against the use of ἕτερος to describe the Son, as in Justin.

111   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 7.1 (trans. Butterworth, 60): ἐὰν δὲ λέγῃ, Αὐτὸς εἶπεν, Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἕν ἐσμέν, ἐπιστανέτω τὸν νοῦν καὶ μανθανέτω ὅτι οὐκ εἶπεν ὅτι ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἕν εἰμί, ἀλλ᾽ ἕν ἐσμέν. τὸ γὰρ ἐσμέν οὐκ ἐφ᾽ ἑνός λέγεται, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ δύο· ⟨δύο⟩ πρόσωπα ἔδειξεν, δύναμιν δὲ μίαν. Note that Hippolytus' distinction between "am" and "are" here is a clear example of the anti-monarchian exegesis of these passages that Mark DelCogliano has highlighted. See his "The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–138.

the Father is in me?' (Jn 14, 9–10)—and they want to say that thereby their doctrine prevails, since [Christ] maintains that he himself is the Father.[112]

Although Hippolytus does not provide us with any of the specifics of their exegesis of this passage, it is easy to see how it fit within their theological framework. This passage addresses the visibility of God; and because they used it to identify the Father and Son, it would have supported their contention that they believed in the one God who was visibly revealed.[113] As the monarchian controversy developed through the third century, John 10:30 and John 14:8–10 became centerpieces of their exegetical argument. While the Noetians appear to have used them before the time of Hippolytus, they seem not to have had yet the central role in the argument. Later authors, like Tertullian and Novatian, note that these two passages from the Gospel of John were fundamental for the monarchians.

4.2.4   Suffered and Died

The Noetians moved from their identification of the Father and the Son to what was for them the logical consequence of that identification: the attribution of suffering to the Father. If Hippolytus' fixation on this claim is an accurate indicator, this last phase of the Noetian system was quite irksome for him. He highlights this aspect of their teaching in the opening lines of the text: "[Noetus] said that Christ was the Father himself, and that the Father himself had been born and had suffered and died."[114]

The same theme is restated a little later, with the Noetians reasoning, "But Christ himself, being God, suffered. Therefore, did not the Father suffer? For he himself was the Father."[115] Unlike the earlier passage, the logical flow of

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112   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 7.4 (trans. Butterworth, 62): εἰ δὲ καὶ Φίλιππον ἐπερωτᾶν περὶ Πατρὸς βούλοιντο λέγειν—Δεῖξον ἡμῖν τὸν Πατέρα καὶ ἀρκεῖ ἡμῖν· πρὸς ὃν ἀπεκρίθη ὁ Κύριος λέγων, Τοσοῦτον χρόνον μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι, Φίλιππε, καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωκάς με; ὁ ἑωρακὼς ἐμὲ ἑώρακε τὸν Πατέρα· οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί ἐστιν;—καὶ θέλουσιν λέγειν διὰ τούτου κρατύνεσθαι τὸ δόγμα αὐτῶν, ὁμολογοῦντος αὐτοῦ ἑαυτὸν Πατέρα.

113   Remember that they spoke of the one God who was visibly revealed in *Contra Noetum* 2.6.

114   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.2 (trans. Butterworth, 42 with modifications): ἔφη τὸν Χριστὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν Πατέρα, καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Πατέρα γεγεννῆσθαι καὶ πεπονθέναι καὶ ἀποτεθνηκέναι. In this digest of the Noetian teaching, Hippolytus does not mention their repeated assertions that they believed in only one God. Perhaps he does not mention it here because the Noetian claim that they believed in only one God was not problematic on the surface. After all, Hippolytus himself began his demonstration of the truth with the same claim.

115   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.3 (trans. mine): ἔπαθεν δὲ Χριστὸς αὐτὸς ὢν Θεός. ἆρα οὖν ἔπαθεν Πατήρ; ⟨Πατὴρ⟩ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἦν.

the Noetian argument is explicit here. Because the Noetians held that the Father and Son were the same, they attributed to the Father everything that was ascribed to the Son, including suffering. The Noetians' sense of the logical necessity of their patripassian claim is again highlighted a bit later. Hippolytus has his opponent stating the following, "'I am bound', says he, 'since the existence of a single one is maintained to submit this very one to suffering.'"[116]

Hippolytus repeatedly focuses on the same claims of the Noetians, and his short digests of their teaching punctuate the sections where he details their exegesis in depth. He produces one more example of the Noetian claim before demonstrating how they are in error: "You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, 'The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!'"[117] This passage shows that the Noetians extended their logic beyond suffering when attributing the Son's experiences to the Father. They seem to have applied their logic to all aspects of the life of Christ. Immediately preceding his demonstration of the truth, Hippolytus offers a final refutation of the Noetians' position, saying, "There is one God, in whom we must believe; but he does not become, cannot suffer, cannot die."[118]

In Hippolytus' treatment, the Noetians never use scripture to support their claims that the Father suffered. Hippolytus examines and refutes the exegetical underpinnings of all of the other Noetian claims, so it is probable that the Noetians made their assertions about the Father suffering without additional scriptural exegesis. This approach would be in line with the logical sequence in which the Noetians argued for the suffering of the Father: if the Father and the Son are the same, and the Son suffered, then the Father must have suffered. Thus is confirmed Heine's conclusion that the patripassian thesis of the Noetians was a logical conclusion to an exegetical argument but not itself exegetically derived.[119]

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116   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.7 (trans. Butterworth, 46): Τούτων οὕτως μαρτυρουμένων ἀνάγκην, φησίν, ἔχω, ἑνὸς ὁμολογουμένου, τοῦτον ὑπὸ πάθος φέρειν.

117   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.2 (trans. Butterworth, 48): ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοί, πῶς προαλὲς καὶ τολμηρὸν δόγμα παρεισήνεγκαν ἀναισχύντως λέγοντες, Αὐτός ἐστι Χριστὸς ὁ Πατήρ, αὐτὸς Υἱός, αὐτὸς ἐγεννήθη, αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν, αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἤγειρεν.

118   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 8.3 (trans. Butterworth, 64): εἷς γὰρ Θεός ἐστιν, ᾧ δεῖ πιστεύειν, ἀλλ' ἀγένητος ἀπαθὴς ἀθάνατος.

119   Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 83: "The monarchian thesis, in which the Noetians included Christ, is derived from their reading of Scripture, but the patripassianist thesis is supported solely by logic based on the monarchian thesis."

4.3   *Conclusion*

Despite being a short treatise, *Contra Noetum* gives us a clear window into the teachings of the Noetians. Furthermore, this treatise might be the earliest in-depth attestation we have to any monarchian teaching. The following are the salient points of the Noetian system according to *Contra Noetum*. (1) The Noetian teaching, with the exception of the patripassian thesis, was heavily based in scriptural exegesis.[120] (2) Their strict interpretation of the claim that there is only one God underwrote the rest of their theological system. (3) Their repeated contention that the one God was visible seems to have arisen as a response to interpretations that saw the *Logos* in the Old Testament theophanies. (4) The Noetians identified the Father and the Son, and they most likely used key passages from the Gospel of John to sustain this identification. (5) The patripassian thesis of the Noetians was the one aspect of their system that was not supported by exegesis. It appears to have been a logical conclusion drawn from the earlier exegetical premises.

5   Tertullian: *Adversus Praxean*

5.1   *Introduction*

Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* is one of the most important extant treatises for reconstructing the positions of the monarchians in the early third century. Although this work gives us valuable information about monarchian teaching, it still leaves many historical and biographical questions unanswered. It addresses the teachings of Praxeas, a character shrouded in mystery, but it tells us little about the origins of monarchianism. Despite all of the questions that *Adversus Praxean* leaves unanswered, scholars are relatively confident about dating the text to ca. 213 C.E.[121] Tertullian's emphasis on the Paraclete and

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120   Again, Decker's claims that the scriptural references are interpolations seem implausible. See Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156–157.

121   See Evans' discussion of external evidence for this dating ("Introduction," 18). See also René Braun's suggestion that it was written in 213 or shortly after. Braun also gives a short summary of dating proposals by major scholars (*Deus Christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed., Collection des études augustiniennes 70 [Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1977], 576). Timothy David Barnes dates the text a bit earlier— to 210/11 (*Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985], 55). Andrew McGowan notes that the work certainly comes from Tertullian's Montanist period and places it sometime in the second decade of the third century ("Tertullian and the 'Heretical' Origins of the 'Orthodox' Trinity," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 14, no. 4 [2006]: 440).

prophecy throughout the text lets us confidently place it during the beginning of his Montanist phase.[122] Tertullian directs his ire against Praxeas because "he drove out prophecy and introduced heresy: he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father."[123]

Although there is relative certainty about the dating of the text to the earliest years of Tertullian's Montanist phase, there are many basic questions that the text leaves unanswered. Chief among these is the question of the exact identity of Praxeas, for whom we have no further attestation beyond *Adversus Praxean* and works that seem to be dependent on it.[124] Tertullian gives us two major pieces of data about Praxeas, neither of which does much to help us identify him with any precision. First, Tertullian recounts that Praxeas journeyed from Asia to Rome.[125] Given the paucity of other details about Praxeas' life, his Asian origin does little to help us identify him.[126] Tertullian next complains that Praxeas somehow gained the ear of the bishop of Rome and convinced him to reject Montanist teachings.[127] Tertullian's statements give the impression that Montanism had gained a favorable hearing in at least some sectors of the church in Rome and that the hierarchy of the church there had not formally rejected it.[128]

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122   For the role of Tertullian's Montanism in his articulation of the Trinity against the monar-chians, see McGowan, "Tertullian and the 'Heretical' Origins of the 'Orthodox' Trinity."

123   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.5 (trans. Evans, 131): *prophetiam expulit et haeresin intulit, Paracletum fugauit et Patrem crucifixit.* Unless otherwise noted, all Latin of *Adversus Prax-ean* is from Tertullian, *Tertulliani Opera: Pars II*, ed. A. Kroymann and Ernest Evans, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 2 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1954).

124   Praxeas is mentioned in Ps. Tertullian, *Adversus omnium haereses* 8.4. We know very little about the author of this text, although scholars have noted that it has some interest-ing similarities with the *Refutatio* ascribed to Hippolytus. See William Tabbernee, *Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments: Ecclesiastical and Imperial Reactions to Montanism*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 78–79. The work itself does not add anything to our knowledge of Praxeas, so I will not treat it further.

125   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.4.

126   This geographical information, however, is useful for trying to reconstruct different streams or schools of monarchianism. See, for example, Heine's discussion of Roman and Asian schools of monarchianism discussed above ("The Christology of Callistus," 78–89). Decker especially focuses on the fact that both Noetus and Praxeas are said to have come from Asia. He concludes, unconvincingly, that theologians from Asia Minor focused on the action of the one God in history, while theologians from the West were focused about differentiation between God and creatures and differentiation within the Godhead. See especially his "Die Monarchianer," 203–205. Such sweeping assertions about differences between East and West with regard to Trinitarian theology were accepted when Decker wrote his dissertation, but they have since been criticized.

127   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.5.

128   For a discussion of the question of Montanism in Rome at the beginning of the third cen-tury, see La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century," 244–251.

Even with the scarcity of biographical information about Praxeas, scholars have ventured a number of theories about his identity and activity. Hermann Hagemann argued that Praxeas was a pseudonym for Callistus.[129] Others have argued that Praxeas was not a pseudonym. Bardy thought that the identification of Praxeas with Callistus faced "too many difficulties to be sustained."[130] Harnack noted the many "hazardous hypotheses" that had been advanced regarding Praxeas before arguing that Praxeas was operative in Rome during the episcopate of Victor. This brief sojourn in Rome, thought Harnack, was followed by Praxeas' journey to Carthage.[131] Like Harnack, La Piana and Bardy suggest that Praxeas was operative in Rome during the episcopate of Victor.[132] Evans, however, finds plausible the suggestions that Praxeas might have been a pseudonym.[133] Moingt rejects the suggestion in older German scholarship and the work of Evans that Praxeas was really a pseudonym that Tertullian used to address the views of someone such as Callistus.[134] He sees no reason for us to doubt the separate existence of a Praxeas. Stuart Hall has advanced the speculative claim that Praxeas is really a pseudonym for Irenaeus.[135] More recently, Allen Brent has taken up the old view that Praxeas is actually a pseudonym for Callistus.[136] Ronald Heine has proposed something of a hybrid theory. He

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129   See Hagemann's lengthy section "Wer war Praxeas" in his *Die römische Kirche und ihr Einfluss auf Disciplin und Dogma in den drei ersten Jahrhunderten* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1864), 234–257.

130   Gustave Bardy, "Monarchianisme," in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, contenant l'exposé des doctrines de la théologie catholique, leurs preuves et leur histoire*, ed. Alfred Vacant, E. Mangenot, and Émile Amann, vol. 10.2 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1929), 2203.

131   Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3:59–60.

132   Bardy, "Monarchianisme," 2197. Not surprisingly, Henri Leclercq adopts Bardy's conclusions in "Monarchianisme," in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq, vol. 11.2 (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1934), 1953–1955. La Piana further argues that Praxeas convinced Victor to drive out Montanism ("The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century," 246–247).

133   Evans, "Introduction," 10–11.

134   See, Joseph Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, vol. 1, Théologie 68 (Paris: Aubier, 1966), 91 n. 2.

135   Stuart George Hall, "Praxeas and Irenaeus," *Studia Patristica* 14.3 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1976), 145–147. Hall's suggestion is tenuous. It is based on an impressionistic reading of the texts, and he fails to produce strong evidence for his claims. The following quotation sums up his reasoning, which is quite abbreviated: "Irenaeus was a figure already revered in the whole Western Church. His great book had been put into Latin. Tertullian himself, in his early days, borrowed from him. But in the crucial issue of Tertullian's life, Irenaeus was on the wrong side. He had persuaded Rome against the new prophecy. So when Tertullian gets the chance, he pins theological heresy upon the honoured theologian of the Catholics. He had not only exiled the Paraclete; he had crucified the Father" (147).

136   Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 525–529.

argues that a real Praxeas was operative in Rome but that Tertullian was also addressing the views of Callistus under the name of Praxeas.[137] There is scarcely enough data to determine with any certainty whether a Praxeas actually existed or was merely a pseudonym used by Tertullian. Our inability to know even this most basic fact about Praxeas does not, however, invalidate the usefulness of this treatise for reconstructing the monarchian position.

Another question that this text leaves unanswered is how exactly the monarchian teaching made its way to Tertullian. Scholars have advanced numerous theories to account for the transmission of this teaching, and these are often drawn from scholars' imaginations as much as from concrete data. Harnack suggests that Praxeas journeyed from Rome to Carthage, evidence for which is nowhere found in the primary literature.[138] Moingt, on the other hand, believes that Praxeas' followers, not Praxeas himself, carried his teaching to Carthage.[139] Again, none of these suggestions is supported by concrete data from the text. All we can say with certainty is that sometime prior to 213, Tertullian had encountered the monarchian teaching that he attributes to a certain Praxeas. Furthermore, this teaching seems to have been accepted by a large portion

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137 Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 59–60. The identification of Praxeas with Callistus depends on a specific confluence of the rise of Callistus in Rome and the composition of *Adversus Praxean*. If we assume that *Adversus Praxean* was written in 213 and we accept the identification of Praxeas and Callistus, we must propose that Callistus had developed enough influence in Rome prior to 213 to attract the attention of Tertullian. The *Refutatio* does suggest that Callistus was already making his influence felt before his elevation to the episcopacy, but the exact chronology of this whole scenario is murky. If, however, we push the date of composition for *Adversus Praxean* later by a few years, the probability that Callistus was wielding power in Rome is substantially higher. Even this reasoning, however, relies on the hostile witness of the *Refutatio*. In the absence of more reliable evidence, theories about the identification of Praxeas and Callistus must remain conjecture, although this conjecture does seem probable.

138 Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 3:59–61; idem, "Monarchianism," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 1963), 459.

139 Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 1:94. Moingt later proposes (p. 100) a chronology for the events in question: "Nous proposons en conséquence cette chronologie. Peu avant 200, venue et agitation de Praxéas à Rome; 200–202, arrivée de ses émissaires à Carthage, première crise et rétractation du docteur; 202–204, agnitio Paracleti (fin des écrits purement 'catholiques' de Tertullien vers 204–205, et apparition dès cette époque des écrits à tendances montanistes); vers 208, defensio Paracleti (ouvrages de propagande puis de polémique montaniste), suivie de la rupture avec l'église officielle (vraisemblablement antérieure aux prodromes de la persécution, soit à 211); 212–214, second crise et Adv. Praxean; 214–215 (au plus tard), De Pudicitia et fin de l'activité littéraire de Tertullien." Ibid., 1:100.

of the Roman population (the *simplices*). Any conclusions beyond these data must be provisional because of the lack of evidence.

5.2   *Textual Analysis*

Although *Adversus Praxean* offers little in the way of historical background of the monarchian position, it provides a store of data that is useful for reconstructing the monarchian teachings during the first quarter of the third century. Hippolytus' treatment of monarchianism in *Contra Noetum* is frontloaded with a summary of core monarchian teachings and the exegesis of certain passages used to support these positions. After Hippolytus summarizes the monarchian positions, he offers alternative exegesis and an exposition of what he considers to be true teaching. Tertullian does not lay out the monarchian positions and scriptural passages quite as neatly as Hippolytus.[140] Monarchian positions and exegetical tendencies are scattered throughout the treatise. Tertullian also spends much more time than does Hippolytus offering alternatives directly opposed to those of the monarchians. For example, Tertullian expends a great deal of energy trying to wrest the term "monarchy" from his opponents and to show that it can be used without destroying distinction in the Godhead.[141] Simonetti argues that the treatise presents a more advanced version of monarchian teaching than *Contra Noetum*.[142]

5.2.1   One God

Like Hippolytus, Tertullian spends a great deal of time addressing the monarchian assertion of the absolute unity of God. In the first words of *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullain accuses the devil of making "a heresy out of the unity."[143] Shortly thereafter, Tertullian bemoans the fact that the Praxean profession holds that

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140   Simonetti notes that *Adversus Praxean* is often rambling and is not as well-organized as *Contra Noetum* ("Due note su Ippolito," 126).

141   For discussions of Tertullian's positive use of *monarchia* and its background, see Kevin B. McCruden, "Monarchy and Economy in Tertullian's Adversus Praxeam," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55, no. 3 (2002): 325–337; T. Verhoeven, "Monarchia dans Tertullien, Adversus Praxean," *Vigiliae Christianae* 5, no. 1 (1951): 43–48. Verhoeven focuses on the background of the term. He argues that the major scholars who discuss its usage (Prestige, Lebreton, Evans) do not pay enough attention to the Hellenistic Jewish context in which it was used by the likes of Philo. Verhoeven argues that within Hellenistic Judaism, it was a defense against pagan polytheism. McCruden focuses a bit more attention on why the Monarchians might have been using the term.

142   Simonetti, "Due note su Ippolito," 128. See especially *Adversus Praxean* 27–29, where Tertullian's testimony shows that there was an early impulse to move away from overt claims of patripassianism.

143   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 1.1 (trans. Evans, 130): *ut et de unico haeresim faciat.*

it is "impossible to believe in one God unless it says that both Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same."[144] In his rendition of the *regula fidei* immediately preceding this complaint, he, like Hippolytus, states explicitly that he believes in only one God.[145] Tertullian's account of the monarchians starts with their assertions regarding the strict unity of God because this seems to have been their most foundational premise, the one that drove all of their other teaching and exegesis.

As I noted above, Tertullian's presentation of the monarchian positions is not nearly as methodical and linear as that of Hippolytus in *Contra Noetum*. Accordingly, Tertullian does not here provide us with the core passages the Praxeans used to support their exclusive understanding of the unity of God. Perhaps one exception to the lack of exegetical underpinning in his presentation of the Praxean understanding of the unity of God is a brief reference to Isa. 45:5. Tertullian states, "Therefore there is one God, the Father, and *besides him there is no other*, and he himself who introduces this ⟨statement⟩ is denying, not the Son, but another god: whereas the Son is not another ⟨god⟩ than the Father."[146] Tertullian is not explicit about how his opponents are using this verse, but his emphasis makes it probable that they were using it in a way similar to the Noetians' use of Isa. 44:6.[147] While Tertullian argues that the verse is combatting polytheism, the Praxeans seem to have suggested that it ruled out Tertullian's understanding of the Son. Later in the treatise, Tertullian suggests that Isa. 45:5 was the monarchians' favorite passage from the Old Testament:

> For as in the old ⟨scriptures⟩ they retain nothing else but, *I am God and other beside me there is not*, so in the Gospel they uphold the Lord's answer to Philip, *I and the Father are one*, and, *He that hath seen me hath also seen the Father*, and, *I am in the Father and the Father in me*. To these three citations they wish the whole appurtenance of both testaments to yield,

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144   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3 (trans. Evans, 132): *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat.*

145   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.1–2. Because he wishes to differentiate his articulation of the one God from that of the monarchians, he quickly adds that his belief in this one God is subject to a *dispensation* that includes a Son through whom all things are made, a Son who comes from the Father.

146   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 18.3 (trans. Evans, 156): Igitur unus Deus pater et alius absque eo non est. Quod ipse inferens non Filium negat sed alium deum. Ceterum alius a Patre Filius non est.

147   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.2.

though the smaller number ought to be understood in accordance with
the greater.[148]

Thus, while Tertullian is not as focused as is Hippolytus on detailing the exege-
sis used to underpin the monarchian articulation of the unity of God, he does
make it clear that Isa. 45:5 was a key passage for their argument.

This monarchian interpretation of the oneness of God was particularly
appealing for those whom Tertullian calls simple folks. For Tertullian, claims
about the oneness of God must be balanced by assertions about the plural-
ity of God in the economy, a balance that Tertullian's *simplices* seem unable to
achieve. Tertullian states, "Simple people … not understanding that while they
must believe in one only ⟨God⟩ yet they must believe in him along with his
economy, shy at the economy."[149] Tertullian, in ways that parallel Hippolytus
closely, argues that the unity of God is administered or distributed in the econ-
omy.[150] The monarchian emphasis on the unity of God does not allow for the
admission of any plurality into the Godhead. Although Tertullian's discussion
of the monarchian emphasis on the absolute unity of God is concentrated at
the beginning of *Adversus Praxean*, he returns to the claim later in the treatise
as well.[151]

It appears as though the Praxeans used the term "monarchy" to signify an
exclusive understanding of the unity of God. Tertullian sums up their position
succinctly:

> They claim that the plurality and ordinance of trinity is a division of
> unity—although a unity which derives from itself a trinity is not de-
> stroyed but administered. And so ⟨people⟩ put it about that by us two or
> even three ⟨gods⟩ are preached, while they, they claim, are worshippers of
> one God—as though unity irrationally summed up did not make heresy
> and Trinity rationally counted out constitute truth. "We hold", they say,

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148   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1–2 (trans. Evans, 159): *Nam sicut in ueteribus nihil aliud
      tenant quam* Ego Deus et alius praeter me non est, *ita in euangelio responsionem Domini
      ad Philippum tuentur:* Ego et Pater unum sumus, et: Qui me uiderit, uidit et Patrem, *et:* Ego
      in Patre et Pater in me. *His tribus capitulis totum instrumentum utriusque testamenti uolunt
      cedere cum oporteat secundum plura intellegi pauciora.*

149   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.1 (trans. Evans, 132): *Simplices enim quique … non intelle-
      gentes unicum quidem sed cum sua oikonomia esse credendum, expauescunt ad oikono-
      miam.*

150   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.

151   See, for example, *Adversus Praxean* 12.1, where Tertullian tells us that the monarchians
      were offended by the plurality of the Trinity.

"to the monarchy": and even Latins so expressively frame the sound, and in so masterly a fashion, that you would think they understood monarchy as well as they pronounce it: but while Latins are intent to shout out "monarchy", even Greeks refuse to understand the economy.[152]

Tertullian, however, does not surrender the term "monarchy" to his opponent. In fact, he places his own claim on the term and demands that it be coupled with a proper understanding of the economy.[153] The fact that Tertullian claims the term "monarchy" for himself bears out the argument of Uríbarri, who thinks that Praxeas' use of the term is aberrant.[154]

Also evident in the above quotation is the common accusation that the monarchians made against their opponents, the charge of ditheism. This charge is repeated later when Tertullian discusses how both the Father and Son were active in creation. Tertullian records the objection of the Praxeans, "'Consequently', you say, 'if God spake and God made, if one God spake and another made, two gods are preached.'"[155] Shortly thereafter, Tertullian has them repeating the accusation, "I will challenge you, today, also by the authority of those scriptures consistently to preach two gods and two lords."[156] Tertullian

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152   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*: 3.1–2 (trans. Evans, 132–133): *Numerum et dispositionem trini-
      tatis diuisionem praesumunt unitatis, quando unitas ex semetipsa deriuans trinitatem, non
      destruatur ab illa sed administretur. Itaque duos et tres iam iactitant a nobis praedicari, se
      uero unius Dei cultores praesumunt, quasi non et unitas irrationaliter collecta haeresin faciat
      et trinitas rationaliter expensa ueritatem constituat. "Monarchiam, inquiunt, tenemus", et ita
      sonum ipsum uocaliter exprimunt etiam Latini, et tam opifice ut putes illos tam bene intel-
      legere monarchiam quam enuntiant. Sed monarchiam sonare student Latini, oikonomiam
      intellegere nolunt etiam Graeci.*

153   See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3–4. See also *Adversus Praxean* 9, where Tertullian argues
      that a proper balance must be maintained between the monarchy and the economy.

154   Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 148–150. If Uríbarri is correct, Tertullian here rep-
      resents the traditional usage of the term. Given the absence of the term in many of the
      other monarchian works, I think Uríbarri is correct in proposing that Praxeas' usage is a
      distortion of the traditional sense.

155   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 13.1 (trans. Evans, 146): *Ergo, inquis, si Deus dixit et Deus fecit,
      si alius Deus dixit et alius fecit, duo dii praedicantur.*

156   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 13.5 (trans. Evans, 147): *prouocabo te ut hodie quoque ex auc-
      toritate istarum scripturarum constanter duos deos et duos dominos praedices.* For another
      iteration of this charge, see *Adversus Praxean* 23.7, where Tertullian states, "Though it were
      the case that we spoke of two divided ⟨from each other⟩, as you put it about that we do,
      yet it were more tolerable to preach two divided than one chameleon god" (trans. Evans,
      166): *Vt sic duos diuisos diceremus, quomodo iactitatis, tolerabilius erat duos diuisos quam
      unum Deum uersipellem praedicare.* Tertullian, of course, argued strongly that the Father
      and Son were not divided in his understanding; they were distinct. With the chameleon

stridently denies that he has ever proclaimed two gods or two lords, but the monarchian accusation persists.[157]

Tertullian suggests that the monarchians were offended by the Trinity because "it is not combined in a simple unity (*unitate simplici*)."[158] It is in the context of his discussion of this "simple unity" that Tertullian mockingly asks if God speaks in the plural in the Genesis 1:26 because God is "father-son-spirit" (*pater filius spiritus*). The occurrence of this *pater filius spiritus* language here calls to mind the teachings about the υἱοπάτωρ often attributed to Sabellius.[159] If this *pater filius spiritus* language is fulfilling the same function as the allegedly Sabellian υἱοπάτωρ, it is quite possible that Sabellius himself was pulling on an earlier tradition, perhaps that of Praxeas and his followers. Although he gives few details about the exegetical underpinnings of the Praxean claim that there is only one God, Tertullian's responses to this claim are littered throughout the work. Tertullian repeatedly asserts that he too believes in one God, but he always qualifies his assertion to make it clear that his understanding of the unity of God is different from that of his opponents.

5.2.2   Father and Son

As in Hippolytus' account of monarchianism, Tertullian bears witness to the fact that the bedrock claim that God is absolutely one was foundational for other core monarchian positions. Also like Hippolytus, Tertullian deals at length with one of the main conclusions the monarchians drew from this assertion: arguing for the absolute identity of the Father and Son. At the beginning of the treatise, Tertullian reproduces a classic expression of the identity, stating, "and in particular this [teaching/heresy] which supposes itself to possess truth unadulterated while it thinks it ought not to believe in one God unless it says that Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same."[160] Although the "one and the same" formula does not occur in *Contra Noetum*, it seems to have become a standard formula for the monarchian assertion of the identity of the

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image, Tertullian accuses them of positng a God who masquerades using different visages for which there is no underlying distinction.

157   Tertullian repeatedly claims that the Father and Son are two. He qualifies this statement in a number of ways: two, but inseparable; two persons, not two things, indivisibly two, etc. For a dense cluster of these assertions, see *Adversus Praxean* 22.

158   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 12.1 (trans. Evans, 145).

159   See, for example, Eusebius' attribution of this teaching to Sabellius at *De ecclesiastica theologia* 1.1.2.

160   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3 (trans. Evans, 132 with my modification): *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum Deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Fatrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat.*

Father and Son.[161] Tertullian repeats the formula often in *Adversus Praxean*.[162] In the above quotation, Tertullian adds a reference to the Spirit, which does not appear to have been a focus for the monarchians in the other extant witnesses. The vast majority of their claims were about the absolute identity of the Father and Son, without any reference to the Spirit.[163]

Tertullian explicitly hypothesizes that the motivation behind the monarchian identification of the Father and Son was safeguarding the unity of God. He writes the following: "Therefore if their reason for thinking they must believe the identity of the Father and the Son has been that they may prove their case for the unity of God ...."[164] Tertullian was particularly troubled by this teaching of the identity of the Father and Son, and it is clear in his rebuttal that he finds it completely preposterous. Employing a mocking tone, Tertullian

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161 See, for example, the very formulaic use of it in the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11–12, where the author reports on the teaching of Noetus: "For in this manner he thinks to establish the monarchy of God, alleging that Father and Son, so called, are one and the same, not one individual produced from a different one, but himself from himself; and that he is styled by name Father and Son, according to vicissitude of times" (οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ· ὀνόματι μὲν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν). Translation from ANF, 5.128 with modifications Greek from Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, ed. Miroslav Marcovich, Patristische Texte Und Studien, Bd. 25 (New York; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986), 348–349.

162 See *Adversus Praxean* 14, 15, 18, 27.

163 Perhaps Tertullian has inserted the Spirit into a standard formula here. Another explanation is also possible. The author of the *Refutatio* argues that some of the Montanists were also followers of the doctrine of Noetus. See *Refutatio* 10.26. If there was actually a confluence of Montanists and Noetians, it is possible that it could have influenced a form of monarchianism that paid more attention, at least nominally, to the Spirit. For a discussion of the possible relationship between Montanists and Noetians, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of Epistula Apostolorum," *Vigiliae Christianae* 51, no. 4 (1997): 432–433. However, nearly everywhere else that Tertullian interacts with monarchian charges, he is dealing with the Father and Son. He is constantly arguing that they are two while guarding against the charge of ditheism. While Tertullian certainly mentions the Spirit when he is articulating some of his own views, his engagement with the monarchians is largely binitarian, most likely because the monarchians framed their argument almost exclusively in terms of the Father and Son. Although I find his interpretation of monarchianism implausible, Daniel Boyarin also notes that the monarchian controversy was mainly focused on the Father and Son. See Daniel Boyarin, "Two Powers in Heaven: Or, the Making of a Heresy," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 346; idem, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 137.

164 Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 19.7 (trans. Evans, 158): *Igitur si propterea eundem et Patrem et Filium credendum putauerunt ut unum Deum uindicent ....*

pushes his opponents regarding their formulations of the generation of the Son from the Father. He sallies, "Further, you who identify Father and Son, cause the same one both to have brought forth from himself that which is God, and as such to have come forth."[165] Tertullian continues to challenge his opponents, saying, "If you will have me believe that the Father himself is also the Son, show me that it is stated elsewhere in this form, The Lord said to himself, I am my son, today have I begotten myself."[166] In this quotation, Tertullian is employing what comes to be an important method for refuting the monarchian claims about the identity of the Father and the Son: the use of grammatical exegesis.[167]

Within this grammatical exegesis, interpreters paid close attention to the persons (or speakers or actors) revealed in a given passage. At multiple points in *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian focuses his exegesis on who is speaking in a passage and to whom that person is speaking.[168] Another good example of this approach is Tertullian's exegesis of 1 Cor. 15:24–28, a passage that was also very important in later Trinitarian debates. Tertullian argues,

> By this one passage of the apostolic epistle we have already been able to show that Father and Son are two, besides ⟨by deduction⟩ from the names Father and Son, also from the fact that he who has delivered the kingdom and he to whom he has delivered it, as also he who has subjected it and he to whom he has subjected it, must of necessity be two.[169]

In this passage, Tertullian identified two actors. If the Son delivered the kingdom to the Father, argued Tertullian, the Son and Father cannot be the same. As DelCogliano notes, this exegetical technique gained widespread usage and was a central feature in the refutation of monarchian positions. Tertullian and other users of this anti-monarchian technique had at their disposal a host of

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165   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.1 (trans. Evans, 143): *porro qui eundem Patrem dicis et Filium, eundem et protulisse ex semetipso facis et prodisse.*

166   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.3 (trans. Evans, 143): *Si uelis ut credam ipsum esse Patrem et Filium, ostende sic pronuntiatum alibi, "Dominus dixit ad se: filius meus sum ego, ego hodie generaui me".*

167   Use of this method of reading during the onarchian controversy has been ably documented by Mark DelCogliano in his "The Interpretation of John 10:30."

168   See ibid., 120.

169   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 4.4 (trans. Evans, 134): *Hoc uno capitulo epistolae apostolicae potuimus iam et Patrem et Filium ostendisse duos esse, praeterquam ex nominibus Patris et Filii etiam ex eo quod qui tradidit regnum et cui tradidit, item qui subiecit et cui subiecit duo sint necesse est.*

passages that spoke of action between the Father and Son.[170] Tertullian even codified this rule for interpreting scripture:

> You however would make him a liar and a deceiver, a disappointer of this faith ⟨of mine⟩, if being himself his own son he assigned the role of son to another, since all the scriptures display both the demonstration and the distinctness of the Trinity: and from them is derived also our standing rule, that speaker and person spoken of and person spoken to cannot be regarded as one and the same, for as much as neither wilfulness nor deception befits God as that, being himself the one spoken to, he should prefer to speak to another and not to himself.[171]

For Tertullian, a responsible reading of the text could never collapse the distinct actors into one as the monarchians did. These grammatical reading techniques gave authors an arsenal of passages that became an important polemical tool against monarchianism. Within a few generations, this reading technique had become commonplace.[172]

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170   For another notable example of this argument, see Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 12.1. There Tertullian writes, "If you are still offended by the plurality of the Trinity, on the ground that it is not combined in simple unity, I ask you how it is that one only single ⟨person⟩ speaks in the plural, Let us make man after our image and likeness, when he ought to have said, Let me make man after my image and likeness, as being one only single ⟨person⟩ … Or was he speaking to the angels, as the Jews explain it, because they, like you, do not recognise the Son?" (trans. Evans, 145).

171   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.4 (trans. Evans, 144): *Tu porro eum mendacem efficias et fallacem et deceptorem fidei huius si, cum ipse esset sibi filius, alii dabat filii personam quando scripturae omnes et demonstrationem et distinctionem trinitatis ostendant a quibus et praescriptio nostra deducitur non posse unum atque eundem uideri qui loquitur et de quo loquitur et ad quem loquitur, quia neque peruersitas neque fallacia deo congruat ut, cum ipse esset ad quem loquebatur, ad alium potius et non ad semetipsum loqueretur.*

172   Tertullian used other techniques to combat the identification of the Father and Son. One example can be seen in *Adversus Praxean* 10. There, Tertullian argues that the terms Father and Son necessarily imply two who are mutually distinguished from each other. He argues that the monarchians want one person to be both terms of the relationship, but that this is nonsensical. For an excellent discussion of Tertullian's use of Stoic logic in *Adversus Praxean* 10, see Gerald P. Boersma, "The Logic of the Logos: A Note on Stoic Logic in Adversus Praxean 10," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22, no. 4 (2014): 485–498. Boersma argues that chapter 10 is the heart of the treatise: "The heart of the treatise is to be found, I believe, in section 10. Here Tertullian establishes his guiding theological hermeneutic— the ground that sustains the rest of the treatise. Thus, in the rest of the work Tertullian mines the Scriptures, especially the Gospel of John, for all the key passages in which Christ distinguishes himself from the Father. As such, the guiding principles of logic and language that Tertullian lays down in Adversus Praxean 10 serve to aid in correctly under-

In the passage I quoted in the previous section, Tertullian gave the three favorite passages of the Praxeans: Isa. 45:5, Jn 10:30, and Jn 14:9–11.[173] Later, Tertullian further discusses their use of Jn 10:30 and shows that it was one of their favorite passages for arguing for the identity of the Father and Son:

> Here then they wish to make a stand, these fools, yea blind, who see not, first, that 'I and the Father' is an indication of two; secondly, at the end ⟨of the sentence⟩, that 'are' is not from the person of one, because it is spoken in the plural; and then, that he says 'are one ⟨thing⟩', not 'are one ⟨person⟩'. For if he had said 'are one ⟨person⟩' he would have been able to assist their case: for 'one ⟨person⟩' is apparently an indication of the singular number. Yet when he says that two, of the masculine gender are one ⟨thing⟩, in the neuter—which is not concerned with singularity but with unity, with similitude, with conjunction, with the love of the Father who loveth the Son, and with the obedience of the Son who obeys the Father's will—when he says, *One ⟨thing⟩ are I and the Father*, he shows that those whom he equates and conjoins are two.[174]

That the Praxeans focused on John 10:30 is not surprising. Remember that Hippolytus worked to counteract the Noetians' apparent use of this passage in *Contra Noetum*.[175] There are striking similarities between the rebuttals that Hippolytus and Tertullian give of this passage. Both focus on the fact that the verb (*sumus* in this case) is plural, not singular. Tertullian goes further in his analysis of John 10:30 and focuses on the fact that "one" (*unum*) is in the neuter. Tertullian focuses on this fact to show that the unity of Father and Son is not a personal unity. Although "one" (ἕν) is also neuter in the Greek, Hippolytus does not cite this fact as further evidence that the Father and Son are not one in the

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standing the scriptural distinction of Father and Son laid out in the rest of the work." (487) I also argue in my last chapter that surbordinationism was another common antimonarchian tool at the beginning of the third century.

173   See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1–2.

174   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 22.10–11 (trans. Evans, 164). Note Tertullian's focus on the distinction between *unus* and *unum*: *Hic ergo iam gradum uolunt figere stulti, immo caeci, qui non uideant primo "ego et pater" duorum esse significationem, dehinc in nouissimo "sumus" non ex unius esse personae quod pluraliter dictum est, tunc quod "unum sumus", non "unus sumus" ⟨dicit⟩. Si enim dixisset: "unus sumus", potuisset adiuuare sententiam illorum, unus enim singularis numeri significatio uidetur. Adhuc cum duo masculini generis unum dicit neutrali uerbo (quod non pertinet ad singularitatem sed ad unitatem, ad similitudinem, ad coniunctionem, ad dilectionem patris qui filium diligit et ad obsequium filii qui uoluntati patris obsequitur): vnum sumus, dicens, ego et pater, ostendit duos esse quos aequat et iungit.*

175   See especially *Contra Noetum* 7.1.

sense that the monarchians would have it. If Tertullian was drawing on *Contra Noetum*, he appears to have taken the basic argument of Hippolytus and added further proof to it. Since John 10:30 was so important for the monarchians, it would be little surprise if Tertullian sought to bolster a pre-existing anti-monarchian reading of the verse.[176]

5.2.3 Visible

Tertullian expends a great deal of energy discussing questions of the visibility and invisibility of God. As is clear from the earlier discussion of *Contra Noetum*, this question also occupied the Noetians. Whereas the Noetians focused on Baruch 3:36–38 and Isaiah 45:14–15, Tertullian's discussion is primarily concerned with the proper interpretation of Exodus 33:20.[177] Despite the difference in passages used, the same exegetical moves are present in both Hippolytus' and Tertullian's accounts of monarchianism.

Tertullian opens his section on the visibility and invisibility of God by offering an interpretation of Exodus 33:20 that is standard for the early third century. For Tertullian, this passage vindicates his claim about the duality of the Father and Son: "Once more, we have the support in our vindication of the duality of the Father and the Son, of that rule which has defined God as invisible."[178] The tension between the claim that Moses spoke to God face to face and lived (Ex. 33:11) and that none shall see God and live (Ex. 33:20) did not go unnoticed by Tertullian. He diffused this tension by repeating the already commonplace

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176 Just following the passage I quoted, Tertullian notes that Jesus says "I and the Father are one" in order to show that he is the Son of God, not "God himself (*ipsum deum*)." Although beyond the immediate scope of this chapter, it is interesting to note that when he wishes to call both the Father and Son "God" yet maintain their distinction, he will argue that the Father is *ipsum deum*. This understanding of the Father as *ipsum deum* fits well with Tertullian's conception of divine monarchy wherein the Father is God most fully and the Son is God derivatively or by ordinance. This approach is also, in many ways, similar to Origen's discussion of God with and without the article in *ComJn* 2.13–32. I discuss Origen's treatment of this issue at length in the last chapter.

177 One expects to see Exodus 33:20 as the centerpiece of a debate about the visibility of God. Indeed, this verse is perhaps the *locus classicus* for discussing these matters. Hippolytus' discussion of visibility and invisibility, on the other hand, treats monarchian exegesis of passages that seem less directly related to the question at hand. The fact that Tertullian and Hippolytus do not include the same passages in their discussion of visibility and invisibility might suggest that there is not as strong of a relationship of dependence between the two as some have suggested. Alternatively, if a strong relationship is maintained, it could be that the specific opponents of each author used different passages to make common claims.

178 Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean*: 14.1 (trans. Evans, 148): *Adhuc et illa nobis regula adsistit duos uindicantibus patrem et filium, quae inuisibilem deum determinauit.*

assertion that the God who was seen face to face by Moses was in fact the Son. He escapes the apparent difficulty in the following way:

> So then it will be another who was seen, for it is impossible for the same one who was seen, to be characterised as invisible: and it will follow that we must understand the Father as invisible because of the fulness of his majesty, but must acknowledge the Son as visible because of the enumeration of his derivation, just as we may not look upon the sun in respect of the total of its substance which is in the sky, though we can with our eyes bear its beam because of the moderation of the assignment which from thence reaches out to the earth.[179]

Like many of his forebears and contemporaries, Tertullian argued that it was in fact the Son who was visible in the OT theophanies. Thus, for Tertullian, the apparent tension in this text becomes grounds to assert the duality of the Father and Son.

The monarchians against whom Tertullian was writing were also well aware of the tension presented in the biblical text. The monarchians apparently welcomed this tension within the text, for they attributed both visibility and invisibility to the same God.[180] In Tertullian's account, the first move the monarchians made was to consider the ways in which scripture speaks of the Son.

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179   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.3 (trans. Evans, 149): *Iam ergo alius erit qui uidebatur, quia non potest idem inuisibilis definiri, qui uidebatur, et consequens erit ut inuisibilem patrem intellegamus pro plenitudine maiestatis, uisibilem uero filium agnoscamus pro modulo deriuationis, sicut nec solem nobis contemplari licet, quantum ad ipsam substantiae summam quae est in caelis, radium autem eius toleramus oculis pro temperatura portionis quae in terram inde porrigitur*. Tertullian's emphasis that it is the Son's derivation from the Father that allows him to be seen is important for my later examination of Origen's Trinitarian theology within the context of other third century theologians. Although Tertullian does not state it explicitly, it seems that whatever it was that prevented the Father from being visible was not transferred to the Son in the process of derivation.

180   Note here that this is one of the same paired opposites that the author of the *Refutatio* attributes to his opponents in an attempt to show that they derive their teachings from the philosophy of Heraclitus. Not present in Tertullian's account, however, are any of the author of the *Refutatio's* tendentious assertions of monarchian dependence upon Heraclitus. Given the centrality of discussions about the visibility and invisibility of God in the monarchian system, it is highly probable that the monarchians did claim that God is both visible and invisible. In an attempt to discredit their teaching, however, the author of the *Refutatio* constructed a link between this teaching and the philosophy of Heraclitus that probably was not actually present in the monarchian system. For an in-depth discussion of these antitheses, see Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët." Note also that the antitheses feature prominently in the general argument of Hübner. He claims that the antitheses

Tertullian says that his opponents wish to claim that in addition to being visible in the incarnation, "the Son is also invisible as Word and Spirit."[181] With this move, the monarchians were able to argue that there is precedent for attributing both visibility and invisibility to the same one.

After claiming that the same one can be visible and invisible, the monarchians used their oft-repeated assertion of the identification of the Father and the Son. Tertullian rehearses their argument as follows:

> For they also add this to their quibbling, that if on that occasion it was the Son speaking to Moses, he pronounced his own face visible to no man, because of course he was the invisible Father himself under the name of Son. And consequently they wish the visible one and the invisible one to be taken as identical, in the same way as ⟨they wish⟩ Father and Son ⟨to be taken as⟩ identical, because also a little earlier, before he refused Moses ⟨the sight of⟩ his face, it is written that the Lord spake to Moses face to face as a man speaks to his friend, and furthermore that Jacob says, *I have seen the Lord face to face*: consequently the same one is visible and invisible: and because the same one has both attributes, therefore also the invisible Father is himself visible as being also the Son.[182]

Later, Tertullian restates the position of his opponents: "Our adversary will argue that both are rightly spoken, ⟨since he was⟩ visible in the incarnation but invisible before the incarnation; and that consequently the Father, invisible before the incarnation, is the same ⟨Person⟩ as the Son, visible in the incarnation."[183] Tertullian and the monarchians offered competing and oppo-

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are early snippets from an anti-Gnostic rule of faith. These claims run throughout all of his work on monarchianism. See the collection of his essays: Hübner, *Der Paradox Eine.*

181   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.4 (trans. Evans, 149): *Hic ex diuerso uolet aliquis etiam filium inuisibilem contendere, ut sermonem, ut spiritum.*

182   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.5 (trans. Evans, 149): *Nam et illud adicient ad argumentationem quod, si filius tunc ad moysen loquebatur, ipse faciem suam nemini uisibilem pronuntiarit quia scilicet ipse inuisibilis pater fuerit in filii nomine. Ac per hoc sic eundem uolunt accipi et uisibilem et inuisibilem, quomodo eundem patrem et filium, quoniam et paulo supra, antequam faciem moysi neget, scriptum sit dominum ad moysen locutum coram uelut si quis loquatur ad amicum suum, non minus quam et iacob: ego uidi, inquit, deum facie ad faciem. "Ergo uisibilis et inuisibilis idem, et quia idem utrumque, ideo et ipse pater inuisibilis, quia et filius, uisibilis".*

183   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 15.3 (trans. Evans, 151): *Ad hanc diuersitatem uisi et inuisi in unum conferendam qui ex diuerso nobis argumentabitur recte utrumque dictum, uisibilem quidem in carne, inuisibilem uero ante carnem, ut idem sit pater inuisibilis ante carnem qui et filius uisibilis in carne.*

site interpretations of the same passages. When Tertullian considered these passages together, he saw them as clearly demonstrating that the Father and Son must be two, the Father invisible and the Son visible. The monarchians, on the other hand, took these passages as manifesting that the same God was both visible and invisible, both Father and Son, one and the same.

Tertullian's discussion of the visibility of God and its implications for the distinction of the Father and Son is concentrated in *Adversus Praxean* 14–17. Noticeably absent from this concentrated discussion of the visibility of God, however, is any mention of John 14:9–11. The absence of this passage here is striking because Tertullian elsewhere indicates that this was one of the Praxeans' favorite passages.[184] Even more, John 14:9 (he who has seen me has seen the Father) would seem to fit their argument perfectly here. There is a high probability that the Praxeans did use John 14:9–11 to argue that the same God is both visible and invisible, but for undisclosed reasons, Tertullian has omitted it from his most concentrated discussion of the visibility of God.

5.2.4   Became Incarnate, Suffered, and Died

Tertullian repeatedly attacked his opponents because of the consequences their views had on teaching about the incarnation. The monarchian position on the incarnation is straightforward: God "made himself his own Son."[185] As with some of their other claims, the testimony of Tertullian shows that the monarchians were aware that their position seemed to entail an impossibility. They responded to this difficulty as follows,

> "But", ⟨they say⟩, "to God nothing is difficult." Who does not know it? And who is not aware that *things impossible with the world are possible with God?* Also *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the things that are wise.* We have read it all. "Consequently", they say, "it was not difficult for God to make himself both Father and Son, contrary to the law traditional in human affairs: for it was not difficult for God, contrary to nature, to cause the barren woman to bear—or even the virgin."[186]

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184   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1–2.
185   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.1 (trans. Evans, 141): *Ipse se, inquiunt, Filium sibi fecit.*
186   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.7 (trans. Evans, 142): *Sed nihil deo difficile, quis hoc nesciat? et: impossibilia apud saeculum possibilia apud deum, quis ignoret? et: stulta mundi elegit deus, ut confundat sapientia. Legimus omnia. 'Ergo, inquiunt, difficile non fuit deo ipsum se et patrem et filium facere aduersus traditam formam rebus humanis. Nam et sterilem parere contra naturam difficile deo non fuit, sicut nec uirginem'.*

For the monarchians, the claim that the same God was Father and Son is of the same order as the claim that the same God is both visible and invisible. They did not shy away from teachings that ostensibly entailed contradiction.[187]

Tertullian draws out the implications of the monarchian teaching on the incarnation in such a manner that the connections between this teaching and the claim of the identity of the Father and Son are clear. Tertullian states,

> Yet these people bring [the Father] down into Mary's womb, and set him at Pilate's judgement seat, and shut him up in Joseph's sepulchre. Hence therefore it is evident that they are astray. For not knowing that from the beginning the whole course of the divine ordinance has come down through the Son, they believe that the Father himself both was seen and conversed and wrought, and suffered thirst and hunger, in spite of the prophet who says *The eternal God shall never thirst nor hunger at all*— and how much more shall he neither die nor be buried—and that thus the one God, that is, the Father, has always done those things which ⟨in fact⟩ have been performed by ⟨the agency of⟩ the Son.[188]

For Tertullian, the claim that the Father became his own Son entailed a whole host of problems, including the attribution of every event in the life of Christ to the Father. If, as the monarchians claimed, the Father and the Son are the same, one need not try to ascribe some things to the Son and some to the Father, for they could all be equally ascribed to Father and Son. For Tertullian, however, it is improper to attribute to the Father many of the things said of Christ in the gospels, as well as all the apperances of God in the Old Testament.

Tertullian argued that the attribution of suffering to the Father was improper. The monarchians, much to Tertullian's dismay, claimed precisely that the Father did suffer. Tertullian sums up the monarchian teaching at the beginning of his treatise: "And so, after ⟨all this⟩ time, a Father who was born, a Father

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187 There is also the possibility here that Tertullian is stylizing his opponents' position in order to make them look foolish.

188 Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 16.6–7 (trans. Evans, 154–155): *quem isti in uulam mariae deducunt et in pilati tribunal imponunt et in monumentis ioseph reconcludunt. Hinc igitur apparet error illorum. Ignorantes enim a primordio omnem ordinem diuinae dispositionis per filium decucurrisse, ipsum credunt patrem et uisum et congressum et operatum et sitim et esuriem passum—aduersus prophetam dicentem: deus aeternus non sitiet nec esuriet omnino: quanto magis nec morietur nec sepelietur?—et ita unum deum, id est patrem, semper egisse quae per filium gesta sunt.*

who suffered, God himself the Lord Almighty, is preached as Jesus Christ."[189] The fact that Tertullian includes this digest of the most troublesome aspects of monarchian teaching at the beginning of the work is a close parallel to Hippolytus in *Contra Noetum*. Later in the work, he accuses the monarchians of crucifying the Father.[190] Tertullian again charges them with claiming that the Father was both crucified and died.[191]

Although they did not have trouble attributing things proper to the Son to the Father, some monarchians tried to avoid the bald assertion that the Father suffered. Tertullian states, "Further, if the Father is impassible he is of course incompassible: or if he is compassible he is of course passible. So you do him no benefit by this fear of yours. For you fear to call passible him whom you do call compassible."[192] This distinction between passibility and compassibility is elucidated by Heine's work on Callistus' Christology. Heine argues that the introduction of the language of compassibility was meant to distance monarchians from overtly claming that God suffered.[193]

By employing the techniques of grammatical exegesis, Tertullian seeks to show how problematic it was to claim that the Father suffered, was crucified, and died:

> You have him [the Father] crying aloud at his passion, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Consequently either the Son was suffering, forsaken by the Father, and the Father did not suffer, seeing he had forsaken the Son: or else, if it was the Father who was suffering, to what God was he crying aloud?[194]

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189   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.1 (trans. Evans, 131): *Itaque post tempus pater natus et pater passus, ipse deus dominus omnipotens iesus christus praedicatur.*

190   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 10.8.

191   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 29.3.

192   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 29.5–6 (trans. Evans, 177): *porro si impassibilis pater, utique et incompassibilis; aut si compassibilis, utique passibilis. Nihil ei uel hoc timore tuo praestas. Times dicere passibilem quem dicis compassibilem.*

193   Heine notes the tension between the claims at the beginning of *Adversus Praxean* that the Father suffered and the later claims that the Father was actually compassible. Heine has convincingly argued that Callistus and the Roman school developed their monarchian theology away from the patripassian implications that were readily accepted by early monarchians. Heine suggests that it is these views of the later Roman school that are represented in *Adversus Praxean* 27–29 ("The Christology of Callistus," 59–60). This is the insight that underwrites Heine's suggestion that there was actually a monarchian named Praxeas but that Tertullian was also addressing the theology of Callistus under the name of Praxeas. Although it is hard to prove definitively, Heine's theory has the virtue of explaining the seeming contradiction between the theology attributed to Praxeas at the beginning and end of *Adversus Praxean*.

194   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 30.1 (trans. Evans, 178): *habes ipsum exclamantem in passione:*

Thus, for Tertullian, the monarchian claims that the Father suffered were brought about by a way of reading the text that could not account for all of the main actors. These problems derived from the monarchian identification of the Father and the Son, which itself was an outflowing of their strict understanding of the assertion that there is only one God.

5.3 *Conclusion*

Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* exhibits a number of similarities with Hippolytus' *Contra Noetum*. It is clear that both Tertullian and the Praxeans were concerned with the unity of God. Like the Noetians, the Praxeans claimed that the Father and Son were one and the same (*ipsum eundemque*). Consequently, they claimed that the one God was seen in the theophanies, that this one God was both visible and invisible. *Adversus Praxean* does present some notable developments in comparison with *Contra Noetum*. Tertullian records that there were some monarchians who, like the Noetians, had no problem affirming that the Father suffered. Tertullian also bears witness to the fact that some other monarchians began to shy away from a straightforward claim that the Father suffered. In order to avoid this troublesome conclusion, they began to argue that the Father suffered *with* the Son, that he was *compassible* but not passible. Despite this development, a solid core of monarchianism is evident in both works. The monarchians defended a strong view of the unity of God using scriptural exegesis. Similarly, they identified the Father and Son, often using passages from the Gospel of John to support their claim. From the foundation of this identification of the Father and Son, they argued that the same one God was both visible and invisible. Views regarding the passibility of the Father shifted within monarchianism; but the stable, exegetically-supported core remained.

> *deus meus, deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti? ergo aut filius patiebatur a patre derelictus et pater passus non est qui filium dereliquit; aut si pater erat qui patiebatur, ad quem deum exclamabat?*

The *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium* and Novatian's *De Trinitate*

In this chapter, I continue my analysis of contemporary texts that attest to monarchianism. The first of the texts I examine in this chapter, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, presents a host of difficulties. Not least among the difficulties is that the author (of whose identity we are uncertain) has distorted the positions of those whom he opposes. Therefore, evidence gleaned from this text must be used with caution. Novatian's *De Trinitate*, too, presents a clear, sometimes simplistic portrait of his opponents. His portrait of his monarchian opponents is almost certainly less subtle than their theology itself. However, his simplistic portrayal of their theology has the benefit of highlighting the most basic aspects of monarchian theology. After treating these two works, I offer a synopsis of the monarchian sources, summarize my conclusions, and reassess some of the scholarly views about monarchianism. My reconstruction of monarchianism in the first three chapters provides the foundation for re-examining Origen's early Trinitarian theology in the final two.

1 The *Refutatio*

1.1 Introduction
As my earlier discussions of the Hippolytan problem made clear, there is little scholarly consensus regarding the specifics of the *Refutatio*. Most scholars think it was written by a different author than the one who composed the *Contra Noetum*. Among those who think it was written by a different author, there is little agreement about when it should be dated. Because I find Simonetti's arguments convincing, I think the most probable date for the *Refutatio* falls somewhere between 225 and 235 C.E.[1] My acceptance of this dating means that

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1   Simonetti's argument proceeds by first comparing *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. Against Allen Brent, he concludes (with the majority of earlier scholars) that *Contra Noetum* represents an early, simple form of monarchianism and that *Adversus Praxean* draws on it. Since most scholars agree that the *Refutatio* postdates *Adversus Praxean*, Simonetti concludes that it also postdates *Contra Noetum*. This reconstruction of the dating of the texts makes the most sense of the data. See Manlio Simonetti, "Una nuova proposta su Ippolito," *Augustini-*

I think *Refutatio* postdates *Contra Noetum* and likely draws upon it.[2] Because of the gaps in knowledge surrounding the work, I will speak of "the author of the *Refutatio*" instead of Hippolytus. This somewhat cumbersome circumlocution indicates that I consider the work to be the product of a different author than the *Contra Noetum*. For a recent account of the status quaestionis regarding the authorship of the *Refutatio*, see Augusto Cosentino's thorough article.[3]

One of the chief difficulties with the *Refutatio* is that it is fiercely polemical and often highly tendentious. In an attempt to discredit the teaching of his opponents, the author often resorts to *ad hominem* arguments. For instance, he details at length the alleged dishonesty and deception of Callistus.[4] The reliability of these accusations is difficult to corroborate from external sources. Eusebius makes only a brief mention of Callistus in his *Ecclesiastical History*, noting that he succeeded Zephyrinus in the Roman see.[5] Eusebius does not signal any major problems with the teaching or career of Callistus, and this lack stands in stark contrast to our author's overwhelmingly negative portrayal of him. Eusebius does not give any of Callistus' backstory or accuse him of dishonest dealings. Another example of the *Refutatio's* overt anti-Callistan bias is his philosophical genealogy of Callistus' heresy. The author of the *Refutatio* is at pains to argue that Callistus derived his teaching from Heraclitus.[6] Heine's thorough article has demonstrated that in order to make the connection between

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anum 36, no. 1 (1996): 13–46; idem, "Due note su Ippolito: Ippolito interprete di Genesi 49; Ippolito e Tertulliano," in *Ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 13 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1977), 121–136.

2   I have chosen here not to address in any detail the question of the hypothetical relationship between the *Refutatio* and Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*. The overlap in specific vocabulary and analogies between *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* is too great to ignore. This is not the case with the *Refutatio*, which has a completely different tenor and purpose. If the *Refutatio* does draw upon Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*, the reliance is obscured by the differing tendencies of the two authors.

3   Cosentino, "The Authorship of the Refutatio Omnium Haeresium." Although Consentino does not advance a strong position in his article, he offers plenty of evidence that suggests the *Refutatio* might be attributable to Gaius/Caius.

4   *Refutatio* 9.12.1–19. In this section on the *Refutatio*, I use Marcovich's edition of the text and the translation in the ANF unless otherwise noted. Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Patristische Texte und Studien 25 (New York; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1986).

5   Eusebius, *EH* 6.21.

6   For an examination of the role of Heraclitus in the *Refutatio*, see Mouraviev's discussion. Mouraviev focuses on the use of Heraclitus with respect to the teaching of Noetus rather than Callistus. Because his study was published at roughly the same time as that of Jaap Mansfeld, Mouraviev did not have the benefit of access to Mansfeld's detailed argument about the distortions present in the *Refutatio*. Serge N. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët (Commentaire d'Hippolyte, Refut. omn. haer. IX 8–10)," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen*

Callistus and Heraclitus, the author substantially modified some of the distinctive features of Callistus' teaching.[7] Heine has drawn on Mansfeld, who has shown that the author of the *Refutatio* doctored the teaching of Heraclitus as well.[8]

Despite the polemical tone of the *Refutatio*, and the many unanswered questions surrounding Hippolytus, the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum* are two of the most important extant sources for reconstructing the monarchian controversy. The importance of these polemically charged works illustrates acutely the difficult nature of reconstructing the monarchian controversy. We have no extant primary sources from monarchian writers, and we are forced to reconstruct their positions from opponents who often misrepresented their views in an attempt to discredit them. The *Refutatio* seems to be more prone to this misrepresentation than, for example, Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean*. All of these anti-monarchian writings contain some quotations from monarchians, but it is difficult to judge the reliability of these quotations given the absence of any extant monarchian writings. One final matter regarding the *Refutatio* merits brief mention—namely the relationship between books I–IX and X. Book X repeats much of the material from the earlier books, and this has caused some to question whether it is an original part of the book, an additional work by the same author, or the product of a different author altogether. Furthermore, there are some elements in book X, like the discussion of the Montanists, that do not occur in the preceding works. Because the accounts of monarchianism in books IX and X are not contradictory, the reconstruction that follows does not require a firm position on the relationship between books IX and X.[9]

Welt, vol. 2.36.6, 1992, 4375–4402; Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context: Hippolytus' Elenchos as a Source for Greek Philosophy*, Philosophia Antiqua 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

7   Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91.

8   Jaap Mansfeld, *Heresiography in Context*, 231–242. Elsewhere, Mansfeld states regarding Hippolytus, "He is an intelligent and erudite person, an industrious Christian intellectual, but one without an interest in philosophy for its own sake. Philosophy is important to him insofar as, following in Irenaeus' footsteps, he can use it, or rather those of its ingredients which were most favoured in his own time, as powerful polemical tools .... Hippolytus must be considered guilty of doctoring the evidence concerned with the Greek philosophers" (ibid., xvi–xvii). Note the different tone of Mansfeld and Nautin. Nautin considered the *Refutatio* to be the work of Josipe, whom he viewed as a pretentious dilettante. See Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe: Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle*, Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1 (Paris: Cerf, 1947), 103.

9   For a preliminary discussion of the inclusion of book X, see Marcovich's introduction to the critical edition. Miroslav Marcovich, "Introduction," in *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, Patristische Texte Und Studien 25 (New York; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986), 33–35. Marcovich writes, "In conclusion, the origin and presence of Book X in the *Elenchos* is best explained by Hip-

1.2   *Textual Analysis*

1.2.1   Genealogy of Heresy

Because the author of the *Refutatio* is so concerned with tracing the genealogy of the heresy of Noetus and Callistus, whom he repeatedly connects to each other, our first task is to reconstruct the family tree of the heresy as presented in the *Refutatio*.[10] He regularly sees the heresy of Noetus and his successors as part of a complicated web, which can make a reconstruction difficult. His treatment of those whom he considers to be teaching aberrant doctrines follows a long survey of philosophers and their systems. These preceding philosophers provide part of the genealogy that the *Refutatio* is trying to trace.[11] Books nine and ten of the *Refutatio* are the focus of my analysis, but I also highlight relevant sections from the earlier books.[12]

In the *Contra Noetum*, Hippolytus gives no information about the transmission of the teachings of Noetus.[13] He does tell us that Noetus was a Smyrnaean and that he lived recently.[14] The author of the *Refutatio* confirms that Noetus was from Smyrna.[15] At the beginning of book nine of the *Refutatio*, the author

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polytus' *tendency of being highly repetitive* (and occasionally boring)." (34) Marcovich's simple conclusion elides some of the more substantial questions that might be raised.

10   I use "heresy" here not as an evaluative tool of my own, but to represent the position of the author of the *Refutatio*, who unmistakably views monarchianism as a heresy. As I note elsewhere, drawing a sharp line between orthodoxy and heresy at the beginning of the third century is tricky business. See the clarifying essay of Rowan Williams and the extensive studies of Alain le Boulluec for more discussion of this matter: Rowan Williams, "Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Henry Chadwick and Rowan Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1–23; Alain le Boulluec, *La notion d'hérésie dans la littérature grecque, IIe–IIIe siècles*, 2 vols., Collection des études augustiniennes 110–111 (Paris: Etudes augustiniennes, 1985); idem, "L' écriture comme norme hérésiologique dans les controverses des IIe et IIIe siècles (domaine grec)," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, Ergänzungsband 23 (1996): 66–76.

11   Again, note Heine's article that details how the author of the *Refutatio* distorts the theology of Callistus to make it align with Heraclitus' philosophical teaching. See notes 6–7 in this chapter.

12   My decision to focus on book nine and ten of the *Refutatio* is intended to keep the argument focused. Furthermore, the *Refutatio* focuses on Noetus and Callistus in books nine and ten, making them the most important for my study. Callistus seems to be the main target of the author of the *Refutatio*, so he waits to report on his teaching until the culmination of the work.

13   Without giving a detailed account of the genealogy of Noetus' teaching, Hippolytus signals at the beginning of *Contra Noetum* that Noetus' disciples are troublesome. He appears to focus on Noetus in an attempt to get to the root of the problem. See *Contra Noetum* 1.1.

14   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.1.

15   *Refutatio* 9.7.

traces the teaching of Noetus through to Callistus.[16] He states that Epigonus learned the teaching of Noetus and passed it on to Cleomenes. He later reports that Zephyrinus learned the teaching from Cleomenes.[17] Thus, the arrival of Noetus' teaching in Rome would have been by means of either Epigonus or Cleomenes.[18]

This teaching that proved problematic for the author of the *Refutatio* appears to have been introduced to Zephyrinus through the influence of Cleomenes.[19] This statement is interesting because it might shed light on a vague statement of Eusebius in the *EH*. Eusebius considered the teaching of the church in Rome to have been somehow corrupted during the time of Zephyrinus.[20] Eusebius does not provide any details of how the teaching of the church was corrupted during this time, but he does tell us that Zephyrinus' predecessor, Victor, rejected the teaching of Theodotus.[21] The author of the *Refutatio*, in one of his more polemically charged moments, informs us that Zephyrinus' successor, Callistus, at times subscribed to the teachings of Theodotus; but he does not disclose the details of how Theodotus' teaching gained a foothold with the successors of Victor.[22]

If we take the testimony of Eusebius and the *Refutatio* in tandem, we can assume that one of the things that was probably accepted by the church during the episcopate of Zephyrinus was the teaching of Theodotus, which had

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16   See especially *Refutatio* 9.7, 10.27.

17   *Refutatio* 9.7.

18   The translator of the *Refutatio* in the ANF mistranslated 10.27.1 and took it to mean that Noetus learned his heresy from Epigonus. This is certainly not the case; the author of the *Refutatio* consistently traces the heresy from Noetus through Epigonus and Cleomenes. The passage should be translated roughly as follows: "Likewise Noetus ... introduced such a heresy as this, which advanced from a certain Epigonus unto Cleomenes and thus until now it continued through successive teachers ...." (Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Νοητός, τῷ μὲν γένει ὢν Σμυρναῖος, ἀνὴρ ⟨δὲ⟩ ἀκριτόμυθος καὶ ποικίλος, εἰσηγήσατο τοιάνδε αἵρεσιν—ἐξ Ἐπιγόνου τινὸς εἰς Κλεομένην χωρήσασαν καὶ οὕτως ἕως νῦν ἐπὶ τοῖς διαδόχοις διαμείνασαν).

19   *Refutatio* 9.7.

20   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28. Eusebius writes that Victor had repelled improper teachings but "that the truth had been corrupted from the time of his successor, Zephyrinus" (ἀπὸ δὲ τοῦ διαδόχου αὐτοῦ Ζεφυρίνου παρακεχαράχθαι τὴν ἀλήθειαν). Trans. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History: Books 1–5*, trans. Kirsopp Lake, Loeb Classical Library 153 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926), 517.

21   Eusebius, *EH* 5.28. Decker devotes a good portion of his dissertation on monarchianism to reconstructing the theology of the Theodotians. See especially Michael Decker, "Die Monarchianer: Frühchristliche Theologie im Spannungsfeld zwischen Rom und Kleinasien" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Hamburg, 1987), 66–130. On my narrower definition, the Theodotians are not properly monarchians.

22   *Refutatio* 9.12.19, 10.27.4.

previously been rejected by Zephyrinus' predecessor, Victor. Even more, Hippolytus briefly mentions Theodotus in the *Contra Noetum* and, like Eusebius, accuses him of teaching that Christ was a mere human (ἄνθρωπον ψιλόν). The connection of the teachings of Noetus and Theodotus is a common theme in both the *Refutatio* and *Contra Noetum*.[23] When the *Refutatio* is augmented by these other sources, it provides us with enough information to establish a rough genealogy of the teaching of Noetus, one that has it gaining a foothold among leaders of the church in Rome during the episcopate of Zephyrinus.

Books nine and ten of the *Refutatio* have Callistus as their primary target; but before I discuss their presentation of Callistus, it will be fruitful to examine the *Refutatio's* presentation of Callistus' predecessors. Doing so will help to show the framework within which the *Refutatio* presents the theology of Callistus and to elucidate other teaching on the doctrines of God and Christ that the *Refutatio* views as aberrant. After giving this context, I examine the *Refutatio's* accounts of the teaching of Zephyrinus and Callistus, giving special attention to similarities with and divergences from Noetus and the others the *Refutatio* examines.

The first person of interest for us in the *Refutatio* is Apelles. The author of the *Refutatio* accuses him of teaching that there are four gods, thus seeming to remove him from the orbit of monarchian teaching, which strongly held that there is only one God.[24] Apelles is of interest here because he also shows up in Eusebius' *EH*. Both the author of the *Refutatio* and Eusebius include a section on Apelles directly following a discussion of Marcion, and the *Refutatio* states that Apelles was a disciple of Marcion.[25] Drawing from his source, Rhodo, Eusebius records that Apelles confessed that there was only one principle (μίαν ἀρχὴν ὁμολογεῖ).[26] Eusebius is obviously contrasting this position with the teaching of Marcion, whom he describes as teaching that there are two principles (δύο ἀρχὰς).[27] Eusebius goes on to say that Apelles could not explain his reasons for holding that there was only one principle but that he held it nonetheless. If Rhodo's account of Apelles' teaching is correct, it lines up well with the monarchian emphasis; but Eusebius' account of Apelles teaching does not agree with the *Refutatio*. It is possible that Apelles managed to both affirm that there was only one principle and that there were multiple gods, but this possibility seems

23   See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.1.

24   For the primary discussions of Apelles, see, *Refutatio* 7.38 and 10.20.

25   Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 10.20.1.

26   Eusebius, *EH* 5.13.2.

27   Eusebius, *EH* 5.13.3.

unlikely.[28] Presenting him as a disciple of Marcion, the *Refutatio* suggests that he took Marcion's teaching a step further and argued for more than two gods. This emphasis in the *Refutatio* fits well with its placement shortly after discussions of various Gnostic figures. Given the absence of an arbitrating source, it is difficult to determine which source for Apelles' teaching is more accurate.

The next figure of interest in the *Refutatio* is Cerinthus.[29] It begins its discussion of Cerinthus by noting that he taught that the world was not made by the "first [god], but by a certain power (δυνάμεώς) which had been separated (κεχωρισμένης) from the power (ἐξουσίας) which is above all and which is ignorant of the God who is above all."[30] In many ways, this teaching resembles Gnostic formulations wherein the demiurge is ignorant of the fact that there is a higher God. However, it is interesting to note that Cerinthus does not appear to have argued that another god created the world; rather a "power" did so. Although the account is too brief to offer anything definitive, the fact that Cerinthus calls the creator a "power" could be the result of his impulse to protect monotheism.[31]

The *Refutatio* accuses Cerinthus of denying the virgin birth and teaching that Jesus was born of Mary and Joseph in a way similar to all humans.[32] Cerinthus held that the Christ descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at the baptism. Furthermore, he allegedly taught that this Christ left Jesus after the passion but that the Christ did not suffer because he was πνευματικόν.[33] This sort of teaching is what Harnack wishes to identify by his "dynamistic monarchian" label.[34] Immediately after this treatment of Cerinthus, the *Refutatio* claims that

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28   For the background of the possibility of Apelles affirming both of these things, see Dillon, "Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition."

29   Eusebius mentions Cerinthus a few times in the *Ecclesiastical History*. See *EH*, 3.28, 4.14, 7.25. With regard to Cerinthus, Eusebius is not concerned with any of the same issues as the author of the *Refutatio*. Eusebius' overriding concerns regarding Cerinthus have to do with issues of chiliasm and the proper conception of the Kingdom of Christ.

30   *Refutatio* 7.33.1. Translation mine.

31   What I mean by this is that certain strands of Gnosticism had an impulse to be monotheistic—or at least monistic. By saying a power created, Cerinthus is able to avoid positing the existence of another god, if that was his intention. See John Dillon, "Monotheism in the Gnostic Tradition," in *Pagan Monotheism in Late Antiquity*, ed. Polymnia Athanassiadi and Michael Frede (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1999), 69–79. Note also that in 10.21.1, the *Refutatio* reports that Cerinthus thinks the demiurgic power is "angelic."

32   *Refutatio* 10.21.2: Τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν λέγει μὴ ἐκ παρθένου γεγεν⟨ν⟩ῆσθαι, γεγονέναι δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξ Ἰωσὴφ καὶ Μαρίας υἱόν, ὁμοίως τοῖς λοιποῖς ⟨ἅπασιν⟩ ἀνθρώποις. See also 7.33.1.

33   *Refutatio* 10.21.3; 7.33.2.

34   For Harnack's naming schema of "modalistic" and "dynamistic" monarchianism, see Adolf

the Ebionites held views of Jesus that were similar to those of Cerinthus.[35] Although the *Refutatio* does not alert us to the motivations of his teaching about Christ, Cerinthus' teaching effectively protects a strict understanding of the uniqueness of God. He does not use the exact wording, but Cerinthus' teaching is almost identical to the "mere man" Christologies I discussed earlier. In his scheme, Jesus is nothing more than a human upon whom Christ descends. Jesus is certainly not presented as divine.[36]

Immediately following its discussion of the Ebionites, the *Refutatio* examines the teachings of Theodotus, who is important for its later discussions of Zephyrinus and Callistus. According to the *Refutatio*, Theodotus taught that Jesus was similar to all humans, except that he was born of a virgin by the will of God. Like Cerinthus, he is accused of teaching that the Christ descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism. The *Refutatio* then reports that the followers of Theodotus expanded on this doctrine and taught that before the descent of the Christ onto Jesus, the latter's "powers" were inoperative. The *Refutatio* takes Theodotus' position to be a denial of the divinity of Christ.[37]

After Theodotus, the *Refutatio* examines the teachings of the Montanists. At first it gives a standard account of Montanism springing from Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla; but then it states that there were other Montanists who followed the teachings of Noetus.[38] It states that these Noetian Montanists held that the same one is both Son and Father, seen and unseen, begotten and unbegotten, etc.[39] Antithetical pairings of this sort recur in the *Refutatio's* accounts of Heraclitus, Noetus, and Callistus. There is some question about the relation-

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von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 13; Adolf von Harnack, "Monarchianism," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson and George William Gilmore, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker, 1963), 454.

35   *Refutatio* 10.22.1; 7.34.

36   The *Refutatio* does not clarify whether the descending Christ is divine or what the precise relationship between the Christ and Jesus is.

37   *Refutatio* 10.23.1–2: Θεόδοτος ⟨δὲ⟩ ὁ Βυζάντιος εἰσηγήσατο αἵρεσιν τοιάνδε, φάσκων τὰ μὲν ὅλα ὑπὸ τοῦ ὄντως θεοῦ γεγονέναι, τὸν δὲ Χριστόν, ὁμοίως τοῖς προειρημένοις γνωστικοῖς, φάσκει τοιούτῳ τινὶ τρόπῳ πεφηνέναι. Εἶναι μὲν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἄνθρωπον κ(οι)νὸν πᾶσιν, ἐν δὲ τούτῳ διαφέρειν, ὅτι κατὰ βουλὴν θεοῦ γεγένηται ἐκ παρθένου, ἐπισκιάσαντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ⟨τ⟩ὸν ἐν τῇ παρθένῳ σαρκωθέντ(α) ὕστερον δὲ ἐπὶ τοῦ βαπτίσματος κατεληλυθέναι τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐν εἴδει περιστερᾶς. ὅθεν φησὶ μὴ πρότερον "τὰς δυνάμεις ⟨ἐν⟩ αὐτῷ ἐνεργηθῆναι". θεὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν θέλει. καὶ τοιαῦτα ⟨δὴ καὶ⟩ Θεόδοτος. See also 7.35.

38   Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 10.25.1.

39   Hippolytus, *Refutatio* 10.26.1: ⟨τὸν⟩ αὐτὸν εἶναι υἱὸν καὶ πατέρα λέγοντες, ὁρατὸν καὶ ἀόρατον, γεννητὸν καὶ ἀγέννητον, θνητὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον, τούτων τὰς ἀφορμὰς ἀπὸ Νοητοῦ τινος λαβόντες.

ship of monarchianism and Montanism, but a full exploration of this matter is beyond the scope of the current chapter.[40]

The *Refutatio* often mentions Zephyrinus in its accounts of the theology of Noetus and Callistus, but it seldom describes what Zephyrinus actually taught. In its account, Zephyrinus is portrayed as a dull and servile man: an "ignorant and illiterate individual, and one unskilled in ecclesiastical definitions."[41] The author of the *Refutatio* also reports that Zephyrinus was bent to the will of Callistus by means of bribes.[42] Later, he expands this portrait of Zephyrinus and presents him as oblivious to the designs of Callistus.[43] According to the author of the *Refutatio*, Zephyrinus is merely an instrument in the transmission of the Noetian teaching. As the author of the *Refutatio* presents it, it is because of his weakness that Noetian teaching gained a foothold in the church in Rome.[44]

It is difficult to isolate monarchian teachings in the *Refutatio* because of the highly polemical and tendentious nature of the work. Furthermore, the author of the *Refutatio* has placed these portraits of monarchianism near the end of his genealogy of heresy. This placement of key sections on monarchianism at the end of the work enables the author of the *Refutatio* to stylize the monarchians so that they appear to be derivative from the philosophers and "heretics" surveyed earlier in the work. Nevertheless, there are a few dense sections where the *Refutatio* addresses monarchianism directly. The tenor of these passages is quite different than similar passages in *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. There are brief glimpses into monarchian teaching, but they are planted in a forest of *ad hominem* caricatures. Even this fragmentary evidence is important

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40 For a short discussion about similarities between Montanism and the teaching of Noetus, see Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of Epistula Apostolorum," *Vigiliae Christianae* 51, no. 4 (1997): 432–433. Note also that one of Tertullian's main complaints against Praxeas was that he was instrumental in getting Montanism expelled from Rome. He writes, "Thus Praxeas at Rome managed two pieces of the devil's business: he drove out prophecy and introduced heresy: he put to flight the Paraclete and crucified the Father." See *Adversus Praxean* 1.5 (trans. Evans, 131). If Tertullian can be trusted here, monarchianism and Montanism appear to be incompatible. We should thus proceed with caution when assessing the *Refutatio's* claims here.

41 *Refutatio* 9.11.1 (trans. ANF 5:128): ἄνδρα ἰδιώτην καὶ ἀγράμματον καὶ ἄπειρον τῶν ἐκκλησιαστικῶν ὅρων.

42 Ibid.

43 *Refutatio* 9.12.14.

44 The author of the *Refutatio* is never clear about the extent to which monarchian teaching pervaded the church in Rome. He does not clarify whether it was actively propounded by the leaders of the church in Rome or whether those leaders merely let it thrive as a popular movement.

because it gives us a view into a Roman monarchianism that probably postdates *Contra Noetum* by some twenty years.

1.2.2 One God

As in the earlier accounts, the monarchian concern to defend the unity of God is readily apparent in the *Refutatio*. The first indication of this fact is seen an episode in the *Refutatio* where Callistus urges Zephyrinus to confess, "'I know that there is one God, Jesus Christ; nor except Him do I know any other that is begotten and amenable to suffering.' And on another occasion, when he would make the following statement: 'The Father did not die, but the Son.'"[45] Whether we should trust the *Refutatio* regarding the machinations of Callistus, the statement it attributes to Zephyrinus rings true because the statement so neatly encapsulates the central concern that the monarchians tried to address: the maintenance of a strict view of monotheism while simultaneously confessing that Jesus is God.

The second statement that the *Refutatio* attributes to Zephyrinus, that the Son died, not the Father, also seems possible, even though it appears to contradict the earlier claim that the one God was "amenable to suffering." Already in Tertullian's *Adversus Praxean* we saw variance about whether the Father suffered—a seemingly necessary consequence of arguing that the Father and Son are one and the same.[46] In the above quotation, it appears as though Zephyrinus was willing to admit a certain (albeit limited) distinction between Father and Son in order to protect the Father from suffering.

Immediately following this passage, the author of the *Refutatio* notes that both Zephyrinus and Callistus accused him of being a ditheist (δίθεοί ἐστε) because he would not consent to their teaching.[47] Despite the seeming concession to protect the Father from suffering, the monarchians continued to maintain that their opponents were ditheists. A short while later, the *Refutatio* gives what appears to be a direct quotation from Callistus: "'I will not,' he says, 'say two gods, Father and Son, but one.'"[48] Callistus here is protecting himself against the very things he accuses his opponents of.

The author of the *Refutatio* even works this strict understanding of the uniqueness of God into his claims about monarchian teachings being derived

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45   *Refutatio* 9.11.3 (trans. ANF 5:128): "ἐγὼ οἶδα ἕνα θεὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πλὴν αὐτοῦ ἕτερον οὐδένα γεν⟨ν⟩ητὸν καὶ παθητόν", ποτὲ δὲ λέγειν· "οὐχ ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ ὁ υἱός".

46   See *Adversus Praxean* 27–29. Note again that this equivocation could reveal different chronological strata of monarchianism as well as possible geographical variation.

47   *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

48   *Refutatio* 9.12.18 (trans. mine): Οὐ γάρ, φησίν, ἐρῶ δύο θεούς, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἀλλ' ἕνα.

from the philosophy of Heraclitus. He has Heraclitus urging that it is proper to believe that "all things are one" (ἓν πάντα εἶναι).[49] According to the *Refutatio*, Heraclitus teaches that the oneness of all things includes contrary pairs such as visible and invisible: "In this manner, Heraclitus assigns to the visible an equality of position and honour with the invisible, as if what was visible and what was invisible were confessedly some one thing."[50] It is probably no mistake that the author of the *Refutatio* claims that Heraclitus taught that the invisible and visible were one thing, for this assertion is commonly attributed to monarchians.[51]

   Although the term μοναρχία does not appear in *Contra Noetum*, it makes a single perplexing appearance in the *Refutatio*, where the latter reports that Noetus "thinks to establish the monarchy, saying that the Father and Son are one and the same …."[52] There are a few possible reasons for this appearance. First, as Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao has suggested, the term might not occur in *Contra Noetum* because it was not a key term for those whom we now call monarchians. It could have been a pejorative label that was mockingly applied to groups for whom it was not an important term.[53] On the other hand, I think Simonetti's hypothesis about the absence of the term in Novatian's *De Trinitate* also gives a plausible explanation of the absence of the term in *Contra Noetum*. Simonetti argued that the term was absent from *De Trinitate* because Novatian knew how important them term was for his opponents and, therefore, intentionally avoided it.[54] Whether the term enjoyed widespread (or any) use by all of those whom I label monarchians, the author of the *Refutatio* suggests that Noetus at least used it to signify a strong conception of the unity of God.[55]

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49   *Refutatio* 9.9.1.

50   *Refutatio* 9.10.1 (trans. ANF 5:126): Οὕτως ⟨οὖν⟩ Ἡράκλειτος ἐν ἴσῃ μοίρᾳ τίθεται καὶ τιμᾷ τὰ ἐμφανῆ τοῖς ἀφανέσιν, ὡς ἕν τι τὸ ἐμφανὲς καὶ τὸ ἀφανὲς ὁμολογουμένως ὑπάρχον·

51   See Mouraviev's detailed discussion of the relationship between Heraclitus' teaching and the successors of Noetus: Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët," 4386–4402.

52   *Refutatio* 9.10.11 (trans. mine): οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν ….

53   See Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996), 236 ff., 247, 279. See also my earlier discussion of Uríbarri's work in the introduction.

54   See, for example, Manlio Simonetti, "Monarchia e Trinità: Alcune osservazioni su un libro recente," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 33, no. 3 (1997): 628. Simonetti articulated this theory in response to Uríbarri Bilbao's thesis. Note also that if Simonetti is right about Novatian, the latter takes the approach opposite to that of Tertullian, who seeks to wrest his opponents' key terms and verses from them and to use them to support his own position.

55   This attribution is not nearly as striking as that in *Adversus Praxean* 3.1–2, where the Praxeans seem to use it as a battle cry: "We hold to the monarchy" (monarchiam tenemus).

The *Refutatio* presents Callistus as having a concern, like Noetus and Zephyrinus, to maintain the unity of God. After saying that Callistus corroborated the heresy of the Noetians, the *Refutatio* claims that he "confesses that there is one God, the Father and creator of all."[56] This statement parallels the beginning of the *Refutatio*'s demonstration of truth and its portrayal of Jewish beliefs. Concerning the Jews, it says, "And they affirm that there is one God, and that He is Creator and Lord of the universe: that He has formed all these glorious works which had no previous existence; and this, too, not out of any coeval substance that lay ready at hand, but wishing to create, He did create."[57] The author of the *Refutatio* begins his own demonstration of truth similarly: "The first and only (one God), both Creator and Lord of all, had nothing coeval with Himself; not infinite chaos, nor measureless water, nor solid earth, nor dense air, not warm fire, nor refined spirit, nor the azure canopy of the stupendous firmament. But He was One, alone in Himself."[58] Nothing about the above claim attributed to Callistus is necessarily offensive for the author of the *Refutatio*. The problem for the author is the way the monarchians parsed this claim out, as will become clear in the next section. Although it is not uncommon for statements of faith to start with an affirmation of belief in one God, the strength and repetition of our author's claims is striking. These strong affirmations of the unity of God countered the frequent monarchian accusation of ditheism.

1.2.3   Father and Son

As in the previous accounts, the identification of the Father and Son was one of the key byproducts of the monarchian affirmation of the unity of God. The *Refutatio*'s account of Noetus' teaching expresses this identification poignantly and is worth quoting fully:

> Now, that Noetus affirms that the Son and Father are the same, no one is ignorant. But he makes his statement thus: "When indeed, then, the Father had not been born, he yet was justly styled Father; and when it pleased him to undergo generation, having been begotten, he himself

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56   *Refutatio* 10.27.3: ἕνα εἶναι θεὸν τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν δημιουργὸν τοῦ παντός·

57   *Refutatio* 9.30.1 (trans. ANF 5:138 with my modifications): καὶ τὸν μὲν θεὸν ἕνα εἶ(ν)αι λέγουσι, δημιουργόν τε τοῦ παντὸς καὶ κ(ύριον), ποιήσ(α)ντα πάντα οὐ πρότερον ὄντ(α), οὐδὲ ἔκ τινος ὑποκειμένης συγχρόνου οὐσίας, ἀ(λ)λ(ὰ) θελήσαντα καὶ κτίσαντα.

58   *Refutatio* 10.32.1 (trans. ANF 5:150): Θεὸς εἷς, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ μόνος καὶ ἁπάντων ποιητὴς καὶ κύριος, σύγχρονον ἔσχεν οὐδέν· οὐ χάος ἄπειρον, οὐχ ὕδωρ ἀμέτρητον, οὐ γῆν στερράν, οὐκ ἀέρα πυκνόν, οὐ πῦρ θερμόν, οὐ πνεῦμα λεπτόν, οὐκ οὐρανοῦ μεγάλου κυανέαν ὀροφήν· ἀλλ᾽ ἦν εἷς, μόνος ⟨ἐφ᾽⟩ ἑαυτοῦ.

became his own Son, not another's." For in this manner he thinks to establish the monarchy, alleging that Father and Son, are one and the same, not one individual produced from a different one, but himself from himself; and that he is styled by name Father and Son, according to vicissitude of times. But that he is one who has appeared, both having submitted to generation from a virgin, and as a man having held converse among men. And, on account of the birth that had taken place, he confessed himself to those beholding him a Son, no doubt; yet he made no secret to those who could comprehend him of his being a Father. That this person suffered by being fastened to the tree, and that he commended his spirit unto himself, having died, and not having died. And he raised himself up on the third day, after having been interred in a sepulchre, and wounded with a spear, and perforated with nails. Cleomenes asserts, in common with his band of followers, that this person is God and Father of the universe, and thus introduces among many an obscurity (of thought) such as we find in the philosophy of Heraclitus.[59]

In *Contra Noetum* and some sections of *Adversus Praxean*, the Father and Son were clearly identified; and their identification was strongly grounded in exegesis. In the *Refutatio's* account of Noetus, however, the identification of the Father and Son is more complex.[60] The *Refutatio* claims that the Noetians taught that God appeared differently depending on the "changing of the times" (κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν). In this schema, the names are merely convenient descriptors, and they all refer to the one, undivided God.[61] There is no underlying

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59   *Refutatio* 9.10.11–12 (trans. ANF 5:127–128 with my modifications): Ὅτι δὲ καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν εἶναι λέγει καὶ πατέρα, οὐδεὶς ἀγνοεῖ· λέγει γὰρ οὕτως· ὅτε μὲν οὖν μὴ ⟨γε⟩γένητο ὁ πατήρ, δικαίως πατὴρ προσηγόρευτο· ὅτε δὲ ηὐδόκησε γένεσιν ⟨ἐκ παρθένου⟩ ὑπομεῖναι, γεν⟨ν⟩(η)θεὶς ὁ ⟨πατὴρ⟩ υἱὸς ἐγένετο αὐτὸς ἑαυτοῦ, οὐχ ἑτέρου. οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ· ὀνόματι μὲν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν, ἕνα δὲ ⟨ὄντα καὶ⟩ τοῦτον εἶναι τὸν φανέντα, καὶ γένεσιν ἐκ παρθένου ὑπομείναντα, καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώπο(ις) ἄνθρωπον ἀναστρα-φέντα· υἱὸν μὲν ⟨γὰρ⟩ ἑαυτὸν τοῖς ὁρῶσιν ὁμολογοῦντα διὰ τὴν γενομένην γένεσιν, πατέρα δὲ ⟨ὄντα⟩ [εἶναι] καὶ τοῖς χωροῦσιν (μ)ὴ ἀποκρύψαντα. ⟨καὶ⟩ τοῦτον ⟨εἶναι τὸν⟩ πάθει ⟨προσελ-θόντα καὶ⟩ ξύλῳ προσπαγ(έ)ντα καὶ ἑαυτῷ τὸ πνεῦμα παραδόντα· ⟨τὸν⟩ ἀποθανόντα καὶ μὴ ἀποθανόντα καὶ ἑαυτὸν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἀναστήσαντα· τὸν ἐν μνημείῳ ταφέντα καὶ λόγχῃ τρω-θέντα καὶ ἥλοις καταπαγέντα. τοῦτον ⟨οὖν⟩ τὸν τῶν ὅλων θεὸν καὶ πατέρα ⟨υἱὸν⟩ εἶναι λέγει Κλεομένης καὶ ὁ τούτου χορός, Ἡρακλείτειον σκότος ἐπεισάγοντες πολλοῖς.

60   Mouraviev's detailed analysis of the difference between the *Refutatio's* presentation of the theology of Noetus and that of his followers is helpful here. Mouraviev, "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët."

61   The scheme that the *Refutatio* presents here is what is typically referred to as "modalism,"

reality within the Godhead that corresponds to the different names. There is one God who appears in different ways at different times, and this is precisely the sort of teaching that prompts many scholars to use the term "modalism."

Although this focus on the applicability of names being determined by the changing of the times adds a new dimension to the monarchian position, there are still vestiges of a simple identification of the Father and Son. Here, as in the preceding accounts, we see the nearly ubiquitous monarchian phrase asserting that the Father and Son are "one and the same" (ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν). The phrase continues with a further clarification that uses the same sort of language present in the earlier treatises. We are told that the names Father and Son, especially with regard to the incarnation, do not reveal two, but rather the same one: "not one coming to be from another, but himself from himself" (γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ).

This explicit denial that the incarnation entails two, one and another, draws together strands that we have already seen in monarchian theology. First, the rejection of "one and another" could be an allusion to the passages from Exodus and Isa. 44–45 that featured prominently in the monarchian theology in *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean. Contra Noetum* claims that the Noetians use an amalgam of passages from Exodus as follows, "He said in the law, 'I am the God of your fathers; you shall not have any gods other than me'" (Εἶπεν ἐν νόμῳ, Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ Θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν· οὐκ ἔσονται ὑμῖν θεοὶ ἕτεροι πλὴν ἐμοῦ).[62] The strong rejection of the use of ἕτερος when discussing the names Father and Son echoes the biblical expressions of monotheism that deny the existence of θεοὶ ἕτεροι.[63] Thus, while the author of the *Refutatio* has tried to expunge any trace of scripture from the theology of his opponents, this usage of ἕτερος might very well bear the marks of the earlier interpretive trajectory.[64]

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and it is easy to see how the term developed to describe this theology. The Greek τρόπος comes from the verb τρέπω, which can mean "to turn." The Latin *modus* translates the Greek τρόπος. Thus, the development of the term Modalism by scholars is not completely without foundation. The problem with the term, however, is that we do not see it used in any of the contemporary texts.

62   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.1. This quotation is a combination of Gen. 46:3 (or Ex. 3:6) with Ex. 20:3.

63   Note also that this approach could be a reaction to Justin's theology in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin unabashedly referred to the Son as another God. See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 56.4.

64   Hübner has also argued that there is an allusion to Baruch 3:36–38 in *Refutatio* 9.10.11, where God is said to have conversed with humans (καὶ ἐν ἀνθρώπο(ις) ἄνθρωπον ἀναστραφέντα). Hübner has a solid case here, as there is a strong similarity with συναναστραφείς in the quotation of Baruch 3:36–38 in *Contra Noetum* 2.5. See Reinhard M. Hübner, "Der antivalentinianische Charakter der Theologie des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine:*

Second, this rejection of the assertion that Father and Son are "one thing and another" might be directly aimed at the sort of expression we find in the demonstration of truth in *Contra Noetum*. There, Hippolytus argues that when the Logos was made manifest in the creation of the world, "another stood beside the Father" (καὶ οὕτως αὐτῷ παρίστατο ἕτερος).[65] Hippolytus quickly goes on to clarify, "but when saying 'another,' I am not saying two gods" (ἕτερον δὲ λέγων οὐ δύο θεοὺς λέγω).[66] For Hippolytus, the use of ἕτερος was important to ensure proper distinction between the Father and Son. He did not use ἕτερος indiscriminately, and his immediate qualification was probably meant to affirm with the passages from Exodus and Isaiah that there are not ἕτεροι θεοί. Insofar as this formulaic use of ἕτερος in the *Refutatio* responds directly to the theology of the early anti-monarchian writers, it seems to be authentic.

The *Refutatio's* report on Noetus' teaching at times seems to suggest the absurdity of the claims of the Noetians. It is unclear if this absurdity was in fact part of the Noetian teaching, or if it is the work of our author's imagination. For example, the claim that the Father became his own Son in the incarnation gives the whole account a farcical feel.[67] Perhaps this was the actual teaching of the Noetians. It seems more likely, however, that this sentence is the product of our author's tendentious imagination, even if it was built upon actual monarchian theology.[68]

Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 115–118. See also Elena Cavalcanti's brief discussion of the use of Baruch 3:36–38 prior to the Arian controversy: "Osservazioni sull'uso patristico di Baruch 3, 36–38," in *Mémorial Dom Jean Gribomont (1920–1986)*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 27 (Roma: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum," 1988), 145–149. The fact that this seeming verbal parallel has made it into the *Refutatio* shows how difficult it would have been for the author of the *Refutatio* to remove any traces of the biblical exegesis that underwrote monarchian theology. Furthermore, the presence of this apparent allusion to Baruch 3:36–38 in the *Refutatio* is particularly damaging to Decker's claim that the Monarchian exegesis in *Contra Noetum* is a polemical invention of Hippolytus. This apparent allusion demonstrates that it was woven into the fabric of their theology. See Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156–157.

65   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1.

66   Ibid.

67   See *Refutatio*, 9.10.11–12.

68   The reports about monarchian positions in the *Refutatio* lack the sort of subtlety such positions probably would have had in their original form. The author of the *Refutatio* seems determined to show that his opponents were ridiculous, even if it means distorting some of the details.

1.2.4   Visible and Invisible

The issue of God's visibility was still a prominent feature in monarchian teaching when the *Refutatio* was written, probably because, as I suggested earlier, questions about the visibility of God were important for those who argued that it was the *Logos* who was visible in the theophanies of the Old Testament.[69] The importance of these questions for the *Refutatio's* opponents is clear in the section where the *Refutatio* explicitly seeks to show that the Noetians derive their teaching from the philosophy of Heraclitus. It states,

> For they advance statements after this manner—that one and the same God is the Creator and Father of all things; and that when it pleased him, he nevertheless appeared, (though invisible,) to just men of old. For when He is not seen He is invisible; *and He is* incomprehensible when He does not wish to be comprehended, but comprehensible when he is comprehended.[70]

The author of the *Refutatio* is clearly presenting the Noetian teaching in pairings of contraries, which he views as absurd. Although the author of the *Refutatio* is clearly reshaping the Noetian teaching to fit it into a Heraclitean paradigm, the core assertions about visibility and invisibility match up with earlier accounts of monarchianism.[71]

In the *Refutatio's* later discussion of Noetus' teaching, similar notions about the visibility of God are reported; but this time, they do not seem to be forced into the Heraclitean paradigm of paired contraries. The *Refutatio* states, "Noetus asserts that there is one Father and God of the universe, and that He made

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69   In some contexts, the claim that the *Logos* appeared in the theophanies could be used to support claims that the Logos was divine and that the *Logos* was distinct from the Father.

70   *Refutatio* 9.10.9–10 (trans. ANF 5:127): λέγουσι γὰρ οὕτως· ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν θεὸν εἶναι ⟨τὸν⟩ πάντων δημιουργὸν καὶ ⟨τὸν⟩ πατέρα, εὐδοκήσαντα μὲν πεφηνέναι τοῖς ἀρχῆθεν δικαίοις, ὄντα ⟨δὲ⟩ ἀόρατον. ὅτε μὲν γὰρ οὐχ ὁρᾶται, ἐστὶν ἀόρατος, ⟨ὅτε δὲ ὁρᾶται, ὁρατός· καὶ⟩ ἀχώρητος μὲν ὅτε μὴ χωρεῖσθαι θέλει, χωρητὸς δὲ ὅτε χωρεῖται· Note here that we see the use of Father without any correlation to a son. As in *1 Clement* in the first chapter, this usage of the title Father seems tied to creation rather than a specific Father-Son relationship.

71   Hübner claims that the sort of antitheses we see in this passage were part of Noetus' early anti-Gnostic rule of faith and that they were then adopted by Ignatius, Melito, Tertullian, and others who post-dated Noetus. Hübner's contention that monarchian use of antithetical statements about God might be anti-Gnostic seems possible, but his revisionist dating of Noetus and Ignatius is untenable. See especially Hübner's two essays on Melito and Ignatius in relation to Noetus: Reinhard M. Hübner, "Melito von Sardes und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 1–37; idem, "Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 131–206.

all things, and was imperceptible to those that exist when He might so desire. Noetus maintained that the Father then appeared when He wished; and He is invisible when He is not seen, but visible when He is seen."[72] Like the earlier discussion of the names Father and Son, whether God is visible seems to depend on the vicissitudes of the times or the will of the deity. There is no distinction between God and the *Logos* on the basis of visibility as there was for someone like Justin.

The author of the *Refutatio* records some of Callistus' teaching regarding the visibility of God. In the first passage of interest, the *Refutatio* states,

> And he adds, that this is what has been declared by the Saviour: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" For that which is seen, which is man, he considers to be the Son; whereas the Spirit, which was contained in the Son, to be the Father. "For," says (Callistus), "I will not profess belief in two Gods, Father and Son, but in one. For the Father, who comes to be out of Himself, after He had taken unto Himself our flesh, raised it to the nature of Deity, by bringing it into union with Himself, and made it one; so that Father and Son must be styled one God, and that this Person being one, cannot be two," and thus that the Father suffered with the Son.[73]

The most interesting feature about his passage is the fact that the author of the *Refutatio* has shown that his opponent used Scripture to support his positions. Even though nearly all of the biblical exegesis of his opponents has been expurgated, this one key passage (John 14:11) manages to make an appearance.

In this passage, Callistus espouses a view that is more akin to psilanthropist views than the sort of monarchianism we see in *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*. Instead of the traditional monarchian assertion that the Father *is* the Son, Callistus reportedly says that the Father was *in* the Son. He even

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72   *Refutatio* 10.27.1–2 (trans. ANF 5:148): λέγων ἕνα ⟨εἶναι θεὸν⟩ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν τῶν ὅλων ⟨δημιουργόν⟩ [τοῦτον πάντα πεποιηκότα]· ἀφανῆ μὲν ⟨γὰρ⟩ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις γεγονέναι ὅτε ἠβού-λετο, φανῆναι δὲ τότε ὅτε ἠθέλησε. καὶ τοῦτον εἶναι ἀόρατον ⟨μὲν⟩ ὅταν μὴ ὁρᾶται, ὁρατὸν δὲ ὅταν ὁρᾶται·

73   *Refutatio* 9.12.17–18 (trans. ANF 5:130 with my modifications): καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ εἰρημένον· "οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί;" τὸ μὲν βλεπόμενον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄνθρω-πος, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸν υἱόν, τ(ὸ) δὲ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ χωρηθὲν πνεῦμα, τοῦτ⟨ο⟩ εἶναι τὸν πατέρα. οὐ γάρ, φησίν, ἐρῶ δύο θεούς, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἀλλ' ἕνα· ὁ γὰρ ἐξ ⟨ἑ⟩αυτοῦ γενόμενος πατήρ, προσλα-βόμενος τὴν σάρκα ἐθεοποίησεν ⟨αὐτὴν⟩ ἑνώσας ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐποίησεν ἕν, ὡς καλεῖσθαι πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἕνα θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο, ἓν ὂν πρόσωπον, μὴ δύνασθαι εἶν(αι) δύο, καὶ οὕτως τὸν πατέρα συμπεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ.

qualifies and says that the Son is the human (ἄνθρωπος). The passage quoted above is immediately followed by an attempt to guard the Father from the bald assertion that he suffered and died, and it appears that the concern with the suffering of the Father is what drives Callistus' position on the visibility of the Son and seeming invisibility of the Father. Here, the visible Son is not properly divine; he is, rather, an ἄνθρωπος who is deified by the Father. This passage clearly demonstrates the ways in which Callistus modified earlier and simpler monarchian teaching.[74]

Despite the allegedly Noetian underpinnings of his theology, Callistus' distinctive developments of monarchian theology appear in another passage. The *Refutatio* states that Callistus believes

> that He who was seen in the flesh and was arrested is Son, but that the Father is [the Spirit] who dwells in Him. Callistus thus at one time branches off into the opinion of Noetus, but at another into that of Theodotus, and holds no sure doctrine. These, then, are the opinions of Callistus.[75]

This belief offers a sharp contrast to the teaching that the *Refutatio* earlier ascribed to Noetus. For Noetus, the one God was visible, sometimes revealed as Father, sometimes as Son. Callistus, as in the passage in the immediately preceding paragraph, seems to be making some sort of distinction between the Father and Son. Callistus distinguishes between God (the Father) and a human (the Son), so this distinction does not imperil Callistus' commitment to the uniqueness of God. The fact that the visibility of God is again closely tied to the suffering of the Son indicates some of the potential motivations for the development. As Heine has argued, Callistus had a strong aversion to the straightforward patripassianism of the earlier monarchians.[76] He suggests that Callistus used Stoic mixture theory in order to argue that the Father was in the (human) Son in such a manner that he could separate himself before the crucifixion and death of the (human) Son. Consequently, people see the flesh (body) of the human Jesus, not the Father himself. Callistus' solution regarding

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74   The theology present here could also be motivation for the *Refutatio's* depiction of Callistus as wavering between the theology of Sabellius and Theodotus in 9.12.19.

75   *Refutatio* 10.27.4 (trans. ANF 5:148 with my modifications): καὶ τὸν μὲν κατὰ σάρκα ὁρώμενον καὶ κρατούμενον υἱὸν εἶναι θέλει, τὸ δὲ ⟨αὐτῷ⟩ ἐνοικοῦν ⟨πνεῦμα⟩ πατέρα, ποτὲ μὲν τῷ Νοητοῦ δόγματι προσρηγν(ύ)μενος, ποτὲ δὲ τῷ Θεοδότου, μηδέν ⟨τε⟩ ἀσφαλὲς κρατῶν. ταῦτα τοίνυν ⟨καὶ⟩ Κάλλιστος.

76   Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 70–71.

the visibility of the Son allows him to say that the Father was invisible without having to sacrifice his strong claims about the unity of God. The resulting development is something of a hybrid of pure monarchianism and psilanthropism. This development also seems to avoid the critique by the *Refutatio* that it is unintelligible to say that the one God is both visible and invisible, passible and impassible. Within Callistus' teaching, at least as presented in the *Refutatio*, Jesus can only be said to be divine in a qualified sense. For Callistus, Jesus would have been divine only as long as the Father continued to remain with or in him.

1.2.5   Suffered and Died

My discussion of *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean* has shown that the question of whether the Father suffered became increasingly acute in the development of monarchianism. Callistus' teaching on the visibility of God and its linkage to issues of patripassianism shows that the concern with patripassianism instigated development away from the simpler forms of monarchian teaching. The changing attitude toward straightforward patripassianism is evident within the account of the *Refutatio*. In order to make the development explicit, I will reexamine the *Refutatio*'s account of the Noetians before analyzing how Callistus modifies this earlier view.[77]

The first instance where the *Refutatio* discusses Noetus' view of the suffering of the Father is of questionable reliability because it is in a section where the Noetian teaching is clearly being distorted to fit into the mold of Heraclitean philosophy. The *Refutatio* accuses the Noetians of teaching that the one God is "immortal and mortal" (ἀθάνατος καὶ θνητός), clearly the sort of antithetical statement that the *Refutatio* suggested was representative of Heraclitus' philosophy.[78] The teaching itself does not seem too far afield for the Noetians, but the distinctly Heraclitean phrasing is suspect.

Just after the overtly Heraclitean wording, the *Refutatio* elaborates on Noetus' teaching without forcing it into the philosopher's alleged paradigm. Noetus claims that the one God underwent generation and became his own son; the one God was then crucified and handed his spirit over to himself; this same one who died did not die (⟨τὸν⟩ ἀποθανόντα καὶ μὴ ἀποθανόντα) and raised himself on the third day.[79] Here, Noetus allegedly attributes the full range of Christ's human experience to the one God: birth, suffering, death, resurrection. Although he says that God died and did not die, he does not try to parcel

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77   Note again that Mouraviev analyzes this development in detail in his "Hippolyte, Héraclite et Noët."

78   *Refutatio* 9.10.10.

79   *Refutatio* 9.10.11–12.

this out between the Father and the Son. Noetus does not appear to have any aversion to saying that the Father suffered and died. In this regard, the *Refutatio's* account squares with that of *Contra Noetum*. Later, the *Refutatio* similarly reports that Noetus taught that the Father was at one time unbegotten and at another begotten, at one time suffered and died while at another time did not suffer and die.[80] While there seems to be contradiction here, Noetus does not hesitate to say that the Father, at certain times, did suffer.

The *Refutatio's* presentation of Callistus' teaching about the suffering of the Father is more complex than that of Noetus. The *Refutatio* reports that Callistus was willing to say that the Father became incarnate from the virgin: "And he affirms that the Spirit, which became incarnate in the virgin, is not different from the Father, but one and the same."[81] In the Noetian schema, where there is a simple identification of the Father and Son, subjecting the Father to birth from the virgin would seem necessarily to entail the suffering of the Father. Callistus, however, employs a Stoicized conception of spirit in attempt to guard against the suffering of the Father.[82]

The *Refutatio* continues to lay out Callistus' teaching, and I include the fuller context in the quotation here:

> Callistus alleges that the Logos Himself is Son, and that Himself is the Father; and that though denominated by the names "Son" and "Father," yet that in reality He is one indivisible spirit. And he maintains that the Father is not one [thing] and the Son another, but that they are one and the same spirit; and that all things are full of the Divine Spirit, both those above and those below. And he affirms that the Spirit, which became incarnate in the virgin is not different from the Father, but one and the same. And he adds that this is what has been declared: "Believest though not that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" [Jn 14:11] For that which is seen, which is man, he considers to be the son; whereas the Spirit, which was contained in the Son, to be Father. "For," says (Callistus), "I will not profess belief in two Gods, Father and Son, but in one. For the Father, having come to be from himself, after He had taken flesh, he deified it, bringing it into union

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80   *Refutatio* 10.27.2. It is possible that these two texts share a common distortion of Noetus' doctrine; but without any primary Noetian sources, we cannot be certain.

81   *Refutatio* 9.12.17. Heine rightly suggests that Callistus' emphasis on Spirit in this passage probably indicates that it was a central concept for his linkage of the Father and Son ("The Christology of Callistus," 64).

82   See Manlio Simonetti's discussion of Callistus' use of a Stoic understanding of spirit in order to avoid patripassianism: "Il problema dell'unità di Dio a Roma da Clemente a Dionigi," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 22, no. 3 (1986): 455–456.

with Himself, and made it one; so that Father and Son are styled one God, and that this Person being one, cannot be two." And in this way Callistus contends that the Father suffered along with the Son; for he does not wish to assert that the Father suffered, and is one Person, being careful to avoid blasphemy against the Father. The senseless and knavish fellow, who improvises blasphemies in every direction, only that he alone might seem to speak according to the truth, and is not abashed at being at one time betrayed into the tenet of Sabellius, whereas at another into the doctrine of Theodotus.[83]

This is a dense passage and needs to be analyzed carefully. The aspect of Callistus' teaching that helps bring the above quotation into focus is that Callistus thought that the one God was "one indivisible spirit" (ἓν δὲ ὄν⟨τα⟩, τὸ πνεῦμα ἀδιαίρετον).[84] For Callistus, the names Father and Son were both ways of referring to this one indivisible spirit. The incarnation, then, was a joining of this spirit to human flesh.[85] As the discussion continues, it appears as though Callistus did not use the name "Son" consistently. At one point, the names Father and Son are both used to refer to the one divine spirit; and the particular name used is determined by the exigencies of the situation. In the quotation above,

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83   *Refutatio* 9.12.16–19 (trans. ANF 5:130 with my modifications): λέγων τὸν Λόγον αὐτὸν εἶναι υἱόν, αὐτὸν καὶ πατέρα, ὀνόματι μὲν ⟨υἱὸν καὶ πατέρα⟩ καλούμενον, ἓν δὲ ὄν⟨τα⟩, τὸ πνεῦμα ἀδι-αίρετον· οὐ ⟨γὰρ⟩ ἄλ⟨λ⟩ο ⟨μὲν⟩ εἶναι πατέρα, ἄλλο δὲ υἱόν, ἓν δὲ καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ⟨πνεῦμα⟩ ὑπάρχειν. καὶ τὰ πάντα γέμειν τοῦ θείου πνεύματος, τά τε ἄνω καὶ ⟨τὰ⟩ κάτω. καὶ εἶναι τὸ ἐν τῇ παρθένῳ σαρκωθὲν πνεῦμα οὐχ ἕτερον παρὰ τὸν πατέρα, ἀλλὰ ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτό. καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ εἰρημέ-νον· "οὐ πιστεύεις ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐμοί;" τὸ μὲν γὰρ βλεπόμενον, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τοῦτο εἶναι τὸν υἱόν, τ(ὸ) δὲ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ χωρηθὲν πνεῦμα, τοῦτ⟨ο⟩ εἶναι τὸν πατέρα. οὐ γάρ, φησίν, ἐρῶ δύο θεούς, πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, ἀλλ' ἕνα· ὁ γὰρ ἐξ ⟨ἑ⟩αυτοῦ γενόμενος πατήρ, προσ-λαβόμενος τὴν σάρκα ἐθεοποίησεν ⟨αὐτὴν⟩ ἑνώσας ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐποίησεν ἕν, ὡς καλεῖσθαι πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἕνα θεόν. καὶ τοῦτο, ἓν ὂν πρόσωπον, μὴ δύνασθαι εἶν(αι) δύο, καὶ οὕτως τὸν πατέρα συμ-πεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ. οὐ γὰρ θέλει λέγειν τὸν πατέ(ρα) πεπονθέναι καὶ ἓν εἶναι πρόσωπον, ⟨οὕτως νομίζων⟩ ἐκφυγεῖν τὴν εἰς τὸν πατέρα βλασφημίαν ὁ ἀνόητος καὶ ποικίλος· ὁ⟨ς⟩ ἄνω κάτω σχε-διάζων βλασφημίας, ἵνα μόνον κατὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγειν δοκῇ, ποτὲ μὲν εἰς τὸ Σαβελλίου δόγμα ἐμπίπτων, ποτὲ δὲ εἰς τὸ Θεοδότου οὐκ αἰδεῖται. This passage raises a number of questions that must be bracketed for later: why do we see the introduction of πρόσωπον language in this passage? Was this language introduced by the author of the *Refutatio* or by Cal-listus? What does Callistus mean when he speaks of the Father bringing flesh into union with himself and making it one? Questions like these will require a treatment beyond the scope of this chapter.

84   *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

85   In other contexts, such an understanding of the incarnation was not problematical. For example, Tertullian considered spirit to be divinity. For him, the statement that spirit was joined to flesh was nothing more than an affirmation that divinity was joined to flesh.

however, Callistus seems to use "Son" also to refer to the human Jesus, the flesh. Callistus says that the Father "suffered with the Son" (συμπεπονθέναι τῷ υἱῷ).[86] This is motivated by the fact that Callistus did not want to say that the Father suffered (οὐ γὰρ θέλει λέγειν τὸν πατέ(ρα) πεπονθέναι). The operative difference here is that Callistus appears willing to admit that τὸν πατέ(ρα) συμπεπονθέναι, but not that τὸν πατέ(ρα) πεπονθέναι. For Callistus, suffering and suffering *with* were two different things; the former was inappropriate for God, while the latter did not pose as much of a problem.

Although he does not explicitly state it, the implication is that it was the Son who suffered. If Callistus were using "Son" consistently to refer to τὸ πνεῦμα ἀδιαίρετον,[87] the attribution of suffering to the Son but not the Father would be self-defeating, for the Father and the Son would be just different names for the same spirit. The equivocation in Callistus' usage of "Son" elucidates the developments that were taking place within monarchianism. On the one hand, he uses traditional monarchian affirmations that the Father and the Son are the same.[88] On the other hand, he wants to argue, in the manner of the psilanthropists, that the Son was only human in order to guard against the charge of patripassianism. Thus, Callistus uses traditional language to argue that the Father and Son were the same while moving away from the earlier claim that this argument meant that the Father suffered. Perhaps when he refers to the suffering of the Son, he is talking about the human Jesus to whom the indivisible spirit was joined and from whom this same spirit could be separated to avoid suffering.

The *Refutatio* accuses Callistus of vacillating between the teaching of Sabellius and Theodotus.[89] If we can trust the account of the *Refutatio*, there is some truth to this accusation. At the same time, however, this alleged vacillation throws the enduring concern of the monarchians into stark relief: the protection of the unity and uniqueness of God. At one time, Callistus can espouse simple monarchian teachings; at another, he can utilize psilanthropist elements to guard against accusations of patripassianism; but the impulse to protect a strong understanding of the unity and uniqueness of God underlies both of these Callistan theological positions.

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86   *Refutatio* 9.12.18.
87   *Refutatio* 9.12.16.
88   The phrase he consistently uses for this idea is some variation of "ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτό." Note the repetition of this phrase in 9.12.16–18.
89   As I note shortly, it is very difficult to know what Sabellius taught. Our main reliable reference to him is Novatian, but he gives us a picture of Sabellian teaching that differs little from the core of monarchianism we have established thus far.

2   Novatian: *De Trinitate*

2.1   *Introduction*

Novatian's *De Trinitate* (*De Trin.*) was most likely composed between 240 and 250 C.E.[90] Because it postdates the other works considered in this chapter by twenty to thirty years, it provides valuable testimony regarding the perdurance of monarchian teaching in Rome. *De Trin.* was most likely written as a commentary on the local *regula fidei*, but Novatian spends a substantial amount of time defending the *regula* against any teachings that jeopardize its central tenets.[91] Novatian's primary concerns are to refute teachings that deny either the divinity or humanity of Christ and to refute monarchianism, which rejects what he regards as proper distinction between the Father and the Son.[92] Of particular interest for my discussion are the sections that Novatian devotes to those who collapse distinction between the Father and the Son and confuse them. Sabellius is the only "heretic" mentioned by name in *De Trin.*, but the monarchianism that Novatian is combatting is little developed from that which is present in Tertullian and Hippolytus.[93]

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90   Russell J. DeSimone, "Introduction," in *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, The Fathers of the Church 67 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 14; idem, *The Treatise of Novatian, the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity: A Study of the Text and the Doctrine*, Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 4 (Rome: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1970), 43–44. In an earlier work, James Leonard Papandrea dates the work to the 240s C.E.: *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome: A Study in Third-Century Orthodoxy* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2008), 43. Later, he suggests that it might have been written as early as the late 230s: *Novatian of Rome and the Culmination of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 175 (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 57–58.

91   *De Trin.* begins with a reference to the "rule of truth," and Novatian states explicitly in chapter 21 that his purpose is to explain the "rule of truth" concerning Christ. DeSimone notes that *De Trin.* was almost certainly not the original title of the work. See Novatian, *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, 23, n. 1. See also Geoffrey D. Dunn's warning against reading later Trinitarian concerns back into Novatian's text: "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 78, no. 4 (2002): 389–390.

92   Unlike Tertullian and Hippolytus, Novatian's *De Trin.* does not use any of the language of monarchy to describe the positions of those who denied the distinction between the Father and the Son. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that he is addressing positions very similar to those with which Tertullian and Hippolytus concerned themselves. See Simonetti's discussion (contra Uríbarri Bilbao) of possible reasons the term *monarchia* is not present in *De Trin.*: Simonetti, "Monarchia e Trinità," 628.

93   Sabellius is mentioned in *De Trin.* 12.7 and 12.9.

On the whole, the monarchianism opposed by Novatian seems to have been built upon the simple propositions that we also find in *Contra Noetum, Adversus Praxean*, and the *Refutatio*.[94] However, unlike the *Refutatio*, Novatian presents the positions of the monarchians as a product of the exegesis of the same cluster of passages that appeared in *Adv. Prax*. Even more, Novatian makes explicit some of the reasoning that funded the exegetical conclusions peculiar to the monarchians. Novatian reproduces the arguments of the monarchians in a simple and straightforward manner. He is by no means a sympathetic witness, but his account is less tendentious than the accounts in *Refutatio* 9–10, which distort the monarchian positions to demonstrate that they derive from the teaching of Heraclitus.

2.1.1   One God

Toward the end of his work, Novatian asserts that the teachings regarding Christ he has been combatting all derive from mistaken attempts to understand the claim that there is only one God. Because this passage demonstrates the lens through which Novatian approaches all the arguments of his opponents, it is worth quoting at length. He states,

> They are scandalized by Christ because the Scriptures assert that He is also God and we believe this. Therefore, that all heretical calumny against our Faith may cease, it is right that we should discuss the fact that Christ is also God (in such a way that it will not interfere with the truth of Scripture or with our faith) because the Scriptures assert and because we maintain and believe that there is only one God. In fact, the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is Himself God the Father, as well as those who would have him to be only a man, have drawn from Scripture the elements and the reasons for their error and perversity. For when they observed that it was written that God is one, they thought that they could not hold such a belief unless they thought they should believe that Christ was a mere man or that He was really God the Father.[95]

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94   See, for example, my summary of the Noetian positions at the end of my section on *Contra Noetum*.

95   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.2–3 (trans. FC 67.104–105). Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of *De Trinitate* are from this translation. *scandalizati in christum, quod etiam deus et per scripturas asseratur et a nobis hoc esse credatur, merito a nobis, ut omnis a fide nostra auferri possit haeretica calumnia, de eo quod et deus sit christus sic est disputandum, ut non impediat scripturae ueritatem, sed nec nostram fidem, qua unus deus et per scripturas promittitur et a nobis tenetur et creditur. Tam enim illi qui iesum christum ipsum*

In Novatian's account, his opponents are attempting to preserve the fundamental claim that there is only one God. They first do so by identifying the Father and Son so that there are not two to whom divinity is attributed. They seek to salvage the divinity of Christ by denying that there is any distinction between Christ and the Father. The second group of Novatian's opponents attempts to solve the problem by arguing that Christ was a mere man, thereby scrapping any attempts to maintain the divinity of Christ.[96]

The above quotation demonstrates that both Novatian and his opponents viewed the preservation of monotheism as a first-order question. Elsewhere, he summarizes his opponents' positions, saying, "They express themselves in this manner: Scripture teaches that there is one God. But Christ is God. Therefore, say the heretics, if the Father and Christ are the one God, Christ will be called the Father."[97] Note again that the fundamental premise on which their argument is built is that there is only one God.

Like his opponents, Novatian seeks to preserve the oneness of God. In his discussion of God as creator near the beginning of the work, he echoes the strong assertion of monotheism from Isaiah 45: "I am God, and there is none beside

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deum patrem dicunt quam etiam illi qui hominem illum tantummodo esse uoluerunt, erroris sui et peruersitatis origines et causas inde rapuerunt, quia cum animaduerterent scriptum esse quod unus sit deus, non aliter putauerunt istam tenere se posse sententiam, nisi aut hominem tantum christum aut certe deum patrem putarent esse credendum. Unless otherwise noted, all Latin for Novatian's De Trinitate is from Novatianus, *Opera, quae supersunt nunc primum in unum collecta ad fidem codicum, qui adhuc extant*, ed. G.F. Diercks, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 4 (Turnholti: Brepols, 1972).

96   By the time of Novatian, the identification of the Son with the Father and the denial of the divinity of the Son were fairly common ways of attempting to preserve the core teaching that there is only one God. Both Hippolytus and Eusebius report that Theodotus taught that Christ was a mere human (ἄνθρωπον ψιλὸν). See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 3.1 and Eusebius, *EH* 5.28. The *Refutatio* accuses Callistus of wavering between the teaching of Sabellius and Theodotus. While the *Refutatio* no doubt includes this note in order to show that his opponent is inconsistent, this alleged inconsistency is much more intelligible if we remember that the distinct positions of Sabellius and Theodotus were designed to protect the oneness of God. See *Refutatio* 9.12.19. Whatever other shortcomings they might have, Harnack's terms "modalistic" and "dynmasitc" monarchianism at least show that the two positions are related. Decker, however, rejects Harnack's label and thinks that psilanthropism and monarchianism are entirely distinct phenomena. He claims that Novatian distorts the evidence in order to argue that there is some sort of family resemblance between psilanthropism and monarchianism. See Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 4–5, 53. There is enough linkage between monarchian and psilanthropist positions in other works to surmise that the two might have been related in some way.

97   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.2 (trans. FC 67:90): *Sic enim inquiunt: si unus esse deus promitur, christus autem deus, ergo, inquiunt, si pater et christus est unus deus, christus pater dicetur.*

me."[98] Tertullian also dwells on this passage and states that it is directed against the idolatry of the Gentiles and does not, therefore, deny that the Son is God with the Father.[99] Tertullian's opponents also utilized passages like Isa. 45 that assert that there is only one God in order to deny any distinction between the Father and the Son.[100] Since strong assertions of monotheism drawn from Isa. 45 are prominent in the accounts of both Tertullian and Novatian, which are separated by roughly thirty years, it seems that neither the fundamental assertions of the monarchians nor the dossier of scriptural passages they used to support these assertions had substantially changed during that span of thirty years.

Novatian, like earlier anti-monarchian writers, was apparently accused of being a ditheist by his monarchian opponents. He states, "First of all, then, we must refute the argument of those who presume to make against us the charge of saying that there are two gods."[101] Following a chain of passages where Christ is referred to in the same manner as the Father (good, Lord, etc.), Novatian rejects the accusation of his opponents and turns it against them: "Let them acknowledge, then, by the same line of reasoning that the truth that there is one God is not hindered in any way by the other truth that Christ is also declared to be God."[102] The fact that Novatian had to combat the charge of ditheism as late as the mid-third century clearly demonstrates both that monarchianism was persistent and that its central teachings remained fairly consistent throughout the first half of the third century. Attempts by Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Novatian to distinguish the Father and Son were consistently seen by the monarchians as a confession that there were two gods.

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98   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 3.2 (trans. FC 67:29). Rather than a direct quotation, he offers a pastiche of phrases from Isa. 45:5, 18–22.

99   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 18.

100   Passages from Isaiah 45 feature prominently in second- and third-century theologies. Irenaeus places words from Isa. 45 on the lips of the Valentinian demiurge, who is ignorant of the fact that there are, in fact, many other gods, and others who are higher than he (*Adversus haereses* 1.5.4). There are other indications that monarchianism was, at least in part, a reaction to the tendency of Gnosticism to multiply divine figures in the Pleroma. Thus, passages like Isa. 45 became theological battlegrounds. Those authors who found the positions of Gnosticism and monarchianism unpalatable had to carefully chart a course between the two extremes: a heavily populated Pleroma that bordered on polytheism and a strict understanding of monotheism that rejected distinction in the one God.

101   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.21 (trans. FC 67:94): *Et in primis illud retorquendum in istos qui duorum nobis deorum controuersiam facere praesumunt.*

102   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.25 (trans. FC 67:107 with modifications): *eadem ratione intellegant offici non posse ab illo quod unus est deus ei quod deus pronuntiatus est et christus.*

2.1.2   Excursus: Sabellius Outside of *De Trinitate*

As I noted in my discussion of naming the monarchian controversy in the introduction, one of the commonly used names for this theology is "Sabellianism." There, I argued that calling this theology "Sabellianism" adds little to our understanding of it. In order to support that contention, I offer here a brief excursus on our knowledge of Sabellius. In its brief discussion of Sabellius, the *Refutatio* paints a murky picture. First, it suggests that Callistus perverted Sabellius even though Callistus had the power to set him straight.[103] This statement seems to suggest that Callistus corrupted Sabellius (to his own teaching?). Later, however, the *Refutatio* tells us that Callistus drove Sabellius away (ἀπέωσεν) as someone not thinking rightly (ὡς μὴ φρονοῦντα ὀρθῶς), an odd statement given the *Refutatio's* earlier assertion that Callistus corrupted Sabellius.[104] Furthermore, the *Refutatio* suggests that Callistus distanced himself from Sabellius in order to prove his own orthodoxy in response to the *Refutatio's* accusations against him. The *Refutatio's* account of Sabellius grows even more complicated when it tells us that Sabellius accused Callistus of having passed beyond his first faith.[105] Finally, after describing the mutual animosity between Callistus and Sabellius, it claims that Callistus waivers between the dogma of Sabellius and that of Theodotus.[106] Despite the repeated linkage between Sabellius and Callistus in the *Refutatio*, its account does not allow us to form a coherent picture. The *Refutatio* alternately accuses Callistus of corrupting Sabellius, falling into the error of Sabellius, and publicly distancing himself from Sabellius. All of these references to Sabellius occur in one of the *Refutatio's* most venomous attacks on Callistus, and it seems that Sabellius appears in the scene only to besmirch the reputation of Callistus. The *Refutatio* gives us precious little about the content of Sabellius' teaching.

By the end of the third century and the beginning of the fourth, the mere invocation of the name of Sabellius was all that was needed to pillory an opponent. Following Harnack, Bienert notes that the name "Sabellianism" had become the general name for "modalistic monarchianism" in the East at the end of the third century.[107] Despite the widespread use of Sabellius' name to

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103   *Refutatio* 9.11.1.

104   *Refutatio* 9.12.15.

105   *Refutatio* 9.12.16.

106   *Refutatio* 9.12.19. This might be an indication that even in the time the *Refutatio* was being written, monarchianism and psilanthropism were both live options for protecting the uniqueness of God.

107   Wolfgang A. Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," in *Logos: Festschrift für Luise Abramowski* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1993), 124–139. Bienert is drawing from Adolf von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Mohr, 1886),

designate monarchianism, we still have very little information on the distinctive features of Sabellius' teaching. Scarcely more is known about the details of his biography. The author of the *Refutatio* places Sabellius in contact with Callistus in Rome, but later writers place him outside of Rome.[108] Basil of Caesarea, for example, identifies Sabellius as having been from Libya.[109] The *Refutatio* and Novatian, our earliest witnesses to Sabellius, suggest that Sabellius was active in Rome during the beginning of the third century. Since later authors seem to have little firsthand knowledge of Sabellius' teaching, there is little reason to doubt that Sabellius was present in Rome in the early third century.

One might think that Ephiphanius' section on Sabellius in the *Panarion* would shed valuable light on the teaching of Sabellius. Sadly, it does not. Lienhard notes that Hübner has convincingly demonstrated that Epiphanius' primary source for his section on Sabellius is the *Contra Sabellianos* of Pseudo-Athanasius.[110] Lienhard then goes on to note that "the 'Sabellius' of this work is actually Marcellus."[111] The *Contra Sabellianos* actually reproduces the theology of Marcellus under the name of Sabellius.[112] Although Epiphanius heavily employed a source that wrongly attributed Marcellan teaching to Sabellius, that teaching still bears some resemblance to the fundamental tenets of the monarchianism of the beginning of the third century. Near the beginning of his discussion, Epiphanius tells us that the Sabellians taught that the Father and

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674. Bienert later reiterates his position: "Vor diesem Hintergrund wird der Name Sabellius schließlich zur Chiffre für einen in Rom zu Beginn des 3. Jahrhunderts verurteilten Modalismus im Sinne des Patripassianismus, von dem sich auch Kallist abzugrenzen versucht" ("Wer war Sabellius?" *Studia patristica* 40 [Leuven: Peeters, 2006], 364).

108 Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," 130. Bienert suggests that Methodius of Olympus is the earliest author to place Sabellius outside of Rome, but his argument seems to be a bit of a stretch. His contention is not based on any geographical epithet in Methodius but rather on the fact that Methodius accuses Sabellius of teaching that the Father suffers. See Methodius of Olympus, *Symposium* VIII, 10.

109 Bienert, "Sabellius und Sabellianismus als historisches Problem," 136. See, for example, Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle* 9.2.

110 Joseph T. Lienhard, "Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and 'Sabellius,'" *Church History* 58, no. 2 (1989): 166. Lienhard cites Reinhard M. Hübner, "Die Hauptquelle des Epiphanius (Panarion, haer 65) über Paulus von Samosata: Ps-Athanasius, Contra Sabellianos," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 90, no. 2–3 (1979): 201–220. See also Andrew Radde-Gallwitz's discussion on this text, at least part of which he thinks sheds light on Sabellius' actual teaching: "The Holy Spirit as Agent, Not Activity: Origen's Argument with Modalism and Its Afterlife in Didymus, Eunomius, and Gregory of Nazianzus," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 3 (2011): 233–235.

111 Lienhard, "Basil of Caesarea, Marcellus of Ancyra, and 'Sabellius,'" 166.

112 Ibid., 167.

the Son and the Spirit are the same—one ὑπόστασις with three names.[113] He next recounts that the Sabellians used a dossier of biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments.[114] As in the earliest accounts of monarchianism, this dossier of texts begins with those that assert that there is only one God. Also included in this dossier are key texts from John's Gospel that feature prominently in third-century accounts of monarchianism. As in Tertullian's account of monarchianism, Epiphanius suggests that Sabellius and his followers preyed on the simple people in the church:

> Then, when they encounter simple or innocent persons who do not understand the sacred scriptures clearly, they give them this first scare: 'What are we to say, gentlemen? Have we one God or three gods?' But when someone who is devout but does not fully understand the truth hears this, he is disturbed and assents to their error at once, and comes to deny the existence of the Son and the Holy Spirit.[115]

It seems, therefore, that there is little in Epiphanius' account that is of use for clarifying details about the life and teaching of Sabellius. We must be wary of anything in Epiphanius that reflects a substantial change from the earlier sources, as it likely reflects the teaching of Marcellus more than the teaching of Sabellius. The elements in Epiphanius' account that comport well with the the third-century accounts of monarchianism tell us little more than that some key features of monarchianism survived until at least 377, when Epiphanius most likely completed the *Panarion*.[116]

It turns out, then, that the attestation to Sabellius that postdates the third century is of little use for reproducing the details of Sabellius' life and teaching. First, we do not even have a detailed explication of his teachings from contemporary sources. Second, shortly after his lifetime, his name became a

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113   Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.1. Given the paucity of references to Sabellius that are reliable at the requisite level of detail, it is difficult to know if Sabellius actually used terms like ὑπόστασις to denote the oneness of God.

114   Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.2.

115   Epiphanius, *Panarion* 62.2. Translation from Epiphanius, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis*, trans. Frank Williams, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 36 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 122. The clear Trinitarian focus of this passage is indicative that it post-dates the earliest phases of the monarchian controversy. Recall that the debates of the early stage of the monarchian controversy were largely couched in binitarian terms.

116   For the dating of the Panarion, see Frances M. Young and Andrew Teal, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2010), 196.

watchword used by the opponents of monarchianism and its continued influence. When his name became used as a general cypher for monarchianism, as Bienert suggests, there was little hope that any later author would add nuance to accounts of his teaching.

2.1.3   Novatian Continued

While the *Refutatio* focuses on the political relations between Callistus and Sabellius to the exclusion of any of Sabellius' specific doctrines, Novatian cursorily makes mention of Sabellius' teaching without going into the details of his life. What exactly was it about Sabellius that warranted him being the only "heretic" mentioned by name in Novatian's *De Trinitate*? Certainly it was not merely the erroneous doctrine that Novatian attributed to him. As I noted in the quotations above, Novatian twice accused Sabellius of teaching that Christ is the Father. There is nothing spectacular or novel about this teaching that Novatian ascribes to Sabellius. By the time of Novatian's writing, such statements identifying the Father and the Son were commonplace, little more than garden-variety monarchianism in the middle of the third century. Since there is nothing especially noteworthy about the teaching that Novatian attributes to Sabellius, there must be something else that makes him notable. The most likely reason Novatian mentions Sabellius by name is that he had become the most public and influential monarchian in Rome by Novatian's day. Sabellius deserved to be mentioned by name not because his teaching was any worse than that of other monarchians but because Novatian wished to attack the leader of the monarchian cause in Rome.[117]

2.1.4   Father and Son

As in the earlier accounts of monarchianism, Novatian portrays his monarchian opponents as still claiming that the same [one] was both Father and Son. He writes,

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117   DeSimone claims that Novatian is concerned with Sabellius because he "came to Rome and introduced a second, more refined form of Monarchainism called *Modalist Monarchianism*" (*The Treatise of Novatian*, 74, italics in original). DeSimone's use of "modalist Monarchianism" here, as opposed to "crass Monarchianism" is not standard usage of the term; and it does not add any clarity to the discussions. As I argued above, it is difficult to see anything distinctive about Sabellius' teaching in *De Trin*. Uríbarri Bilbao suggested that Novatian was directly addressing the theology of Sabellius in *De Trin*. and that this is one of the reasons Novatian does not use the term *monarchia* (*Monarquía y Trinidad*, 429). As I note elsewhere, I do not find Uríbarri's views convincing in this case.

They want to show that Christ is God the Father by the very fact that He is declared to be not only Man but also God. They express themselves in this manner: Scripture teaches that there is one God. But Christ is God. Therefore, say the heretics, if the Father and Christ are the one God, Christ will be called the Father. In this syllogism they are proved to be in error, not knowing Christ, but rather favoring the mere sound of a name. For they want Him not to be the Second Person after the Father, but the Father Himself.[118]

This passage highlights one of the idiosyncrasies of Novatian's depiction of monarchianism: their identification of the Father and the Son appears to flow only in one direction. Almost every time Novatian rehearses his opponents' position, he records that they say that Christ is the Father, never that the Father is Christ. This tendency is elucidated by other, clearer passages. The following passage is especially helpful:

The Scriptures so clearly teach that Christ is also God that many heretics, deeply moved by the reality and the grandeur of His divinity, stressed His glories to such an extent that they did not hesitate to declare (or at least were of the opinion) that He was not the Son, but God the Father Himself. Though this opinion of theirs is contrary to the truth of the Scriptures, it is, nevertheless, a weighty and excellent argument for the divinity of Christ. He is so indisputably God—that is, as Son of God, born of God—that many heretics, as we have said, took Him to be God in such a manner that they thought that He must be called the Father, not the Son.[119]

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118   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.1–2 (trans. FC 67:90): *hoc ipso patrem deum uolentes ostendere christum esse, dum non homo tantum asseritur, sed et deus promitur. Sic enim inquiunt: si unus esse deus promitur, christus autem deus, ergo, inquiunt, si pater et christus est unus deus, christus pater dicetur. In quo errare probantur christum non noscentes, sed sonum nominis approbantes; nolunt enim illum secundam esse personam post patrem, sed ipsum patrem.*

119   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 23.2–3 (trans. FC 67:84): *Nam usque adeo hunc manifestum est in scripturis et deum tradi, ut plerique haereticorum diuinitatis ipsius magnitudine et ueritate commoti, ultra modum extendentes honores eius, ausi sint non filium, sed ipsum deum patrem promere uel putare. Quod etsi contra scripturarum ueritatem est, tamen diuinitatis christi argumentum grande atque praecipuum est, qui usque adeo deus, sed qua filius dei natus ex deo, ut plerique illum, ut diximus, haeretici ita deum acceperint, ut non filium, sed patrem pronuntiandum putarent.*

Novatian reiterates his point in this passage when he says, "Hence, though they read in Scripture that He is the Son, they think that He is the Father because they readily perceive that the Son is God."[120] For Novatian's monarchian opponents, the Father is God; and divinity appears to reside exclusively with the Father.[121] For them, any admission that the Son is God necessarily entails that he is the Father.[122] Since the monarchians, unlike the psilanthropists, had no reservations about affirming the divinity of Christ, they did not hesitate to identify Christ with the Father.

Novatian also depicts his opponents as expressing the identity of Christ and the Father with syllogistic reasoning.[123] Novatian repeats a condensed version of this same reasoning later in the treatise, writing, "Now the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is the Father argue as follows: If God is one and Christ is God, then Christ is the Father, because God is one."[124] The frequency with which Novatian addresses the monarchian contention that the Son was the Father shows how central he thought this claim was to monarchian theology. Such an emphasis prompts Novatian to devote substantial energy to showing that the Father and Son are not the same.[125]

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120   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 23.4 (trans. FC 67:84): *ad hoc illos manifesta christi diuinitate cogente ut, quem filium legerent, quia deum animaduerterent, patrem putarent.* Novatian repeatedly claims that his opponents argued that Christ was the Father himself throughout the remainder of ch. 23.

121   This teaching in itself is not necessarily troubling. Recall that for many first- and second-century authors the one God is said to be the Father.

122   This is an interesting similarity to Origen's schema in *ComJn* 2.13 ff. There, Origen argues that the Father is αὐτόθεος. In the context, Origen's unique construction seems to mean that the Father is properly God. Origen also held that the Son was divine but only by participation in the divinity of the Father. Both Origen and Novatian's monarchian opponents agreed that divinity is preeminently (or in the case of the monarchians, exclusively) the Father's.

123   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.1–2.

124   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 30.4 (trans. FC 67:105): "Et quidem illi qui iesum christum patrem dicunt ista praetendunt: si unus deus, christus autem deus, pater est christus, quia unus deus." Whatever distortions Novatian might make to his opponents' positions, his depiction of their syllogistic reasoning is not intended to present their positions as devoid of scriptural backing. He writes, "In fact, the heretics who say that Jesus Christ is Himself God the Father, as well as those who would have him to be only a man, have drawn from Scripture the elements and the reasons for their error and perversity." *De Trinitate* 30.3 (trans. FC 67:105): *Tam enim illi qui iesum christum ipsum deum patrem dicunt quam etiam illi qui hominem illum tantummodo esse uoluerunt, erroris sui et peruersitatis origines et causas inde rapuerunt.*

125   See, for example, *De Trinitate* 26.21, where Novatian claims that the Son cannot be the Father because the Son is obedient to the Father.

One of Novatian's chief problems with Sabellius is that he claims that Christ is the Father. Novatian writes, "Thus the sacrilegious heresy of Sabellius, as we said, takes concrete form because of these men who believe that Christ is not the Son but the Father."[126] Later, he states again that Sabellius "says that Christ is the Father."[127]

Toward the end of the treatise, Novatian claims to have disarmed his opponent, saying, "Now that he has been deprived of those two passages, he is like a man who has had his two eyes gouged out; he is completely overcome by the blindness of his own doctrine."[128] In this comment, Novatian is referring to John 14:9 ff. and John 10:30. As I noted in the discussion of *Adversus Praxean* and *Contra Noetum*, these passages were two of the favorite scriptural warrants of the monarchians. In his treatment of John 10:30, Novatian makes a very familiar argument:

> For if Christ were the Father, as the heretics think, He should have said: 'I, the Father, am one [*unus*].' But when He says 'I' and then introduces the Father, by saying 'I and the Father,' He thereby distinguishes and separates the individuality of His own Person, viz. that of the Son, from the authority of the Father, not only as regards the mere sound of the name [Son] but also in regard to the order of power in the divine economy.[129]

Novatian makes a grammatical point here that is almost exactly the same as the move Hippolytus makes in *Contra Noetum*. Hippolytus states there,

> And if he were to say, "He himself said: 'I and the Father are one,'" let him apply his mind to the matter and learn that he did not say "I and the Father am one", but "are one". "We are" is not said with reference to one, but with reference to two. He revealed two persons, but a single power.[130]

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126   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 12.7 (trans. FC 67:51): *Et iam per istos, ut diximus, sabelliana haeresis sacrilega corporatur, siquidem christus non filius, sed pater creditur.*

127   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 12.9 (trans. FC 67:52): *Si patrem, quid dubitant cum sabellii temeritate misceri, qui christum patrem dicit?*

128   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 28.30 (trans. FC 67:99): *quandoquidem duobus istis locis quibusdam effossis luminibus orbatus totus sit in doctrinae suae caecitate superatus.*

129   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.2 (trans. FC 67:92–93): *Si enim erat, ut haeretici putant, pater christus, oportuit dicere 'ego pater unus sum'. At cum ego dicit, deinde patrem infert dicendo ego et pater, proprietatem personae suae, id est filii, a paterna auctoritate discernit atque distinguit, non tantummodo de sono nominis, sed etiam de ordine dispositae potestatis.*

130   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 7.1 (trans. Butterworth, 60).

Both of these passages are clear examples of the grammatical exegesis that became the common defense against the monarchian interpretation of these passages.[131] Novatian thought that these passages were so important to the monarchians that he was able to claim that he had defeated them once he had successfully refuted the monarchian interpretation.

2.1.5   Visible and Invisible

Further along in the *De Trinitate*, Novatian addresses another of the major emphases of monarchianism: the visibility and invisibility of God. As I high-lighted in my examination of the earlier texts, questions of visibility and invis-ibility were major pieces of the monarchian contention that there is only one God. Novatian sets the problem up by juxtaposing texts that claim God appeared to Abraham with Ex. 33:20, which states that none shall see God and live.[132] For Novatian, God was seen in the biblical theophanies; but to uphold the invisibility of the Father, he argues, "Accordingly, this can only mean that it was not the Father, who never has been seen, that was seen, but the Son, who is wont both to descend and to be seen, for the simple reason that He has descended. In fact, He is 'the image of the invisible God.'"[133] Novatian's argument here seems to be directed against something like the monarchian contention that when the Father wishes to be seen, he is visible; and when the Father wishes to remain unseen, he is invisible.[134]

Commenting on the Sermon on the Mount, Novatian takes up the theme of visibility and invisibility again:

> When Christ Himself is seen and touched by the crowd and yet promises and declares that he who is clean of heart shall see God, He proves by this very fact that He, who was then present, was not the Father because He

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131   Again, see Mark DelCogliano, "The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–138.

132   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 18.1.

133   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 18.2–3 (trans. FC 67:67): *Ex quo intellegi potest quod non pater uisus sit, qui numquam uisus est, sed filius, qui et descendere solitus est et uideri, quia descenderit. Imago est enim inuisibilis dei.* Note the discussion of Novatian's exegesis here and else-where to uphold the invisibility of the Father at Adhémar d'Alès, *Novatien, étude sur la thé-ologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, Études de théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924), 90–91. When Novatian himself is speaking, he tends to refer to the Son, whereas he has his monarchian opponents speak of Christ. This fact might be significant, but Nova-tian does not draw attention to this difference.

134   See, for example, the treatment of the theme of visibility and invisibility in *Contra Noetum* 2 and *Adversus Praxean* 14.

promised, while actually present to their gaze, that whoever was clean of
heart would see the Father.[135]

The monarchians consistently maintained that the one God is sometimes vis-
ible and other times invisible. Novatian's position above functions as a ready-
made rebuttal of the position we see in the *Refutatio*: God appeared as Son but
told those who were able to receive it that he was also the Father.[136] Novatian,
on the other hand, takes the passage he interprets here to be a clear demon-
stration that there is a distinction between the Father and the Son, and that
it is the Son who is now seen. Throughout the treatise, Novatian asserts that
gazing upon the visible Son is preparation for the presumably eschatological
vision of the Father, which will come after purification.[137]

Because a group of Novatian's opponents argued that the Son and the Father
were the same, he goes to great lengths to demonstrate that they are distinct.
Although the central aim of this section is to add detail to our account of
monarchianism by means of Novatian's depiction of his opponents, a brief
examination of his responses to them is useful. In the following discussion,
Novatian's concern to explain another theophany shows that the proper inter-
pretation of these theophanies was one of the most contested points between
the monarchians and their opponents.

Novatian's assertion that the Son is both God and angel is one of the more
interesting moves that he makes in order to prove the distinction between the

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135   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 28.28 (trans. FC 67:99): *Quando autem dum contingitur ipse christus
et uidetur, repromittit tamen et dicit quoniam qui mundo fuerit corde deum uidebit, hoc ipso
probat se non esse, qui tunc praesens cum uideretur repromittebat quod patrem uisurus esset
quisquis mundo corde fuisset.*

136   *Refutatio* 9.10.11–12.

137   See, for example, *De Trinitate* 28.4, 14, 25. Novatian does not clarify what exactly this vision
of the Father will be like. He also does not spend too much time trying to explain how the
Father is invisible but will later be seen by the pure in heart. The image of God plays an
important part in this discussion: "The Lord, therefore, would never have used all these
arguments, especially after having already given so many that clearly bear witness that He
is not the Father but the Son, if He had been mindful that He was the Father or wished that
He be considered the Father. His sole purpose in these words was to make it clear to us that
every man should henceforth account it to be the same thing to see the image of God the
Father through the Son, as if he had seen the Father. Every man, by believing in the Son,
exercises himself in the contemplation of the image, that he may advance and grow even
to the perfect contemplation of God the almighty Father, after he has grown accustomed
to see the divinity in the Image" (*De Trinitate* 28.25 [trans. FC 67:98]). D'Alès comments
about the vision of the Father, "seul le Fils, image du Dieu invisible, a été vu, parce que
seul il est descendu. Par lui la fragilité humaine se fortifie peu à peu et s'accoutume par
degrés à voir enfin le Père" (*Novatien*, 90).

Father and the Son. Novatian's discussion of the Son as an angel follows directly upon the heels of his examination of the Old Testament theophanies. Novatian sets up the problem by analyzing Gen. 31:11–13, where an angel says to Jacob, "I am the God who appeared to you in the place of God."[138] This passage merits Novatian's attention precisely because he has just argued that the Father was not seen in the theophanies. Novatian needed to explain how the Father remained invisible when this angel, claiming to be God, was seen by Jacob. In order to maintain the invisibility of God, Novatian argues that we must preserve a distinction between "Him who is called simply God and Him who is declared to be not simply God, but an angel as well."[139] He continues and states that while the Father is simply God, the Son is both God and angel, thus using the interpretation of theophanies as a means of distinguishing Father and Son.[140]

2.1.6   Suffered and Died

Although there are signs in *Adversus Praxean* and the *Refutatio* that some monarchians were moving away from asserting that the Father suffered, Novatian's testimony demonstrates that by the middle of the third century, he thought it still worthwhile to oppose the monarchian assertion that the Father suffered, or at least that accusing people of having made such an assertion was an effective polemical tool. He writes, "Well then, say the heretics, if Christ is not only Man but also God, and Scripture says that Christ died for us and rose again, surely Scripture is teaching us to believe that God died."[141] In his attempts to refute this teaching, he states it again in a much simpler form: "If scripture had declared that Christ was only God and there was no association of human frailty traceable in him, then their twisted syllogism would have had some force here: 'If Christ is God, and Christ died, then God died.'"[142]

Novatian constantly reiterates that Christ is both human and divine, which allows him to affirm that Christ suffered and to avoid affirming that the Father

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138   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 19.2 (trans. FC 67:73). See also Justin's assertions that the Son was also an angel, when he interprets Gen. 31:11–13 (*Dialogue with Trypho* 58–59).

139   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 19.3 (trans. FC 67:73): *distinctio sit inter eum qui tantummodo deus dicitur et inter eum qui non deus simpliciter, sed et angelus pronuntiatur.*

140   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 19.4. Novatian also argues this in *De Trinitate* 18.22.

141   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 25.1 (trans. FC 67:88): *Ergo, inquiunt, si christus non homo est tantum, sed et deus, christum autem refert scriptura mortuum pro nobis et resuscitatum, iam docet nos scriptura credere deum mortuum.*

142   Novatian, *De Trinitate*: 25.3 (trans. FC 67:88): *Si enim scriptura proponeret christum tantummodo deum et nulla in illo fragilitatis humanae sociatio esset permixta, merito illorum hic aliquid ualuisset sermo contortus: 'si christus deus, christus autem mortuus, ergo mortuus est deus'.*

suffered. If Novatian can be trusted in the passage above, the monarchians used syllogistic logic to claim bluntly that the Father suffered.[143] Novatian later claims that the psilanthropists used the sufferings and human frailties of Christ to prove that he was only human. They could have used syllogistic reasoning similar to what Novatian outlines above: God does not suffer; Christ suffered; therefore, Christ is not God.[144] In order to counter psilanthropist claims that Christ was only human, Novatian points out that the miracles he performed demonstrate that he was also divine. By his insistence that Christ was both divine and human, Novatian sought to meaningfully say that Christ suffered and at the same time to avoid having to predicate suffering of God.[145]

3   Scholarly Theories Reconsidered

Monarchian theology came from Asia Minor to Rome at the end of the second and beginning of the third century. It quickly gained a following in Rome among the leaders, such as Callistus, and other members of the community. As far as the extant witnesses indicate, Rome became the epicenter of monarchian theology, but monarchianism elicited rebuttals from theologians from Asia Minor (Hippolytus, the author of *Contra Noetum*), North Africa (Tertullian), Alexandria (Origen),[146] and Rome (the author of the *Refutatio* and Novatian). By all accounts, monarchianism was a theological force to be reckoned with in the early third-century church.

3.1   *Early Third-Century Orthodoxy?*
Despite its notable influence in the early third-century church, it is difficult to sustain claims that monarchianism was the majority position in the church or something like an early third-century orthodoxy. Reinhard Hübner is the most recent proponent of this theory, and he suggests that monarchianism was the overwhelming majority position in Christianity until the middle of the

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143   It is difficult to determine here if Novatian's opponents were this direct about the death of the Father or if this is a polemical amplification of something he thought followed from other monarchian premises.

144   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 11.3–4.

145   Novatian likewise wants to protect God from the charge of being changeable: "He never changes or transforms Himself into other forms, lest through change he should appear to be also mortal" (*De Trinitate* 4.4 [trans. FC 67:31]).

146   Although I have not included Origen in any of the analysis up to this point, the final two chapters are devoted to demonstrating his interaction with, and rejection of, monarchianism.

third century.[147] Hübner's theory is built upon a number of suppositions, the most problematic of which requires a revisionist reading of virtually all second-century theology and a revisionist chronology of some major figures.

Although he dismisses *Contra Noetum* as a product of the fourth century, Hübner claims that Noetus antedated a number of major figures in the second century and that these figures, including Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Melito, drew on his theology.[148] Because he does not consider *Contra Noetum* a reliable attestation of Noetus' thought, Hübner bases his portrait of Noetus' theology almost exclusively on the accounts contained in the *Refutatio*. He spends substantial time examining the antithetical statements about God contained in the *Refutatio's* account of Noetus. These, he claims, were excerpted from an anti-Gnostic rule of faith or paschal homily of Noetus.[149] Hübner then surveys other second-century authors who use such antithetical statements about God before concluding that all of these authors must have been drawing on Noetus' allegedly earlier theology.[150]

Unfortunately, the connection Hübner draws between Noetus and the other second-century authors is tenuous. The main point of contact Hübner alleges is antithetical statements about God.[151] Whenever he sees these sorts of statements in second-century writers, he concludes that they are drawing on Noetus. If, in fact, the antithetical statements are authentically Noetian and not the distortions of the author of the *Refutatio*, Hübner's theory does not necessarily follow. Noetus could just as easily have been speaking about God in a manner

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147   See, for example, his introductory remarks to his collection of essays on monarchianism, *Der Paradox Eine: Antignostischer Monarchianismus im zweiten Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), vii. See also Daniel H. Williams' interaction with Hübner's theories: "Monarchianism and Photinus of Sirmium as the Persistent Heretical Face of the Fourth Century," *Harvard Theological Review* 99, no. 2 (April 1, 2006): 188–191.

148   For Hübner's dismissal of *Contra Noetum* as a product of the fourth century, see his "Melito und Noët," 6–9.

149   Hübner, "Die antignostische Glaubensregel des Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 39–94.

150   Hübner concludes that the Ignatian epistles are late, most likely between 165–175. See his, "Die Ignatianen und Noët von Smyrna," in *Der Paradox Eine*, 203–204. Hübner also claims that Ignatius' statements are rendered more intelligible if they are considered as responses to Gnosticism (ibid., 194). He is well aware of the bold nature of his revision, and he explicitly argues that Ignatius should no longer be considered an "Apostolic Father" but rather an Apologist (ibid., 204).

151   Further difficulty arises because Hübner draws on the *Refutatio* to establish that such antitheses were one of the distinguishing characteristics of Noetus' theology. Although he is aware of the polemical distortions in the *Refutatio*, he brushes them aside too easily. Another reason he dismisses *Contra Noetum* as an unreliable witness to Noetus' thought is that it does not contain these sorts of statements (Hübner, "Melito und Noët," 8–9).

common to second-century writers from Asia Minor. There is no evidence that demands (or even suggests) that Noetus was the source on which other second-century theologians drew for such antitheses.

Hübner never explains why one of the most distinctive elements of Noetus' theology, the explicit identification of the Father and Son and concomitant denial of any distinction between them, is absent from all of these authors who allegedly rely on Noetus. Second-century writers were concerned with maintaining that there was only one God, and they often left the precise relationship between the Father and Son unexplored. Even though they did not carefully define the distinction between the Father and Son, they did not overtly identify the Father with the Son as did Noetus. Recall the *Refutatio's* summary of Noetus' teaching in one of the passages Hübner deems trustworthy: "For in this manner he thinks to establish the sovereignty (μοναρχίαν) of God, alleging that Father and Son, so called, are one and the same, not one individual produced from a different one, but himself from himself; and that he is styled by name Father and Son, according to vicissitude of times."[152]

All of the extant accounts of monarchianism that I have studied thus far have shown that the explicit identification of the Father and Son was at the core of monarchian theology. The absence of such strong statements about the Father and Son being identical in second-century texts is an insurmountable obstacle for Hübner's theory. Were Noetus as influential as Hübner contends, one would surely find this central aspect of his teaching mirrored in those writers who allegedly relied on him. It is more probable that Noetus' antithetical statements about God were drawing on traditional ways of speaking about God in Asia Minor.[153] He added to this traditional phraseology the monarchian postulate, that the Father and the Son are one and the same.

Once Hübner's assertions in favor of an early date for Noetus have been problematized, his theories about monarchianism as the overwhelming majority position until the mid-third century lose their firm basis. There is evidence that monarchianism gained a strong following in Rome at the beginning of the third century. However, there is scarcely enough information to determine the extent

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152   *Refutatio* 9.10.11 (trans. ANF 5:128 with modifications): οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν, γινόμενον οὐχ ἕτερον ἐξ ἑτέρου, ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ· ὀνόματι μὲν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν καλούμενον κατὰ χρόνων τροπήν.

153   See, for example, those occurences in the corpus of Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius urges his readers to "wait expectantly for the one who is above time: the Eternal, the Invisible, who for our sake became visible; the Intangible, the Unsuffering, who for our sake suffered, who for our sake endured in every way." Ignatius, *Polycarp* 3.2 (trans. and Greek from Holmes, 264–265): "τὸν ὑπὲρ καιρὸν προσδόκα, τὸν ἄχρονον, τὸν ἀόρατον, τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς ὁρατόν, τὸν ἀψηλάφητον, τὸν ἀπαθῆ, τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς παθητόν, τὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον δι' ἡμᾶς ὑπομείναντα."

to which monarchianism was adopted in other regions. Monarchianism was a conscious reaction to the varieties of Christian theology (like that of Justin) that were perceived as destroying the uniqueness of God. Although authors like Melito and Ignatius do not seem concerned to sharply distinguish the Father and Son, we see nothing in them like the conscious, reactive assertion that the Father and Son are "one and the same." Contrary to Hübner's claims, monarchianism cannot be found in nearly all second-century authors. In fact, there is little evidence for the conscious identification of the Father and Son before the beginning of the third century.

3.2   *An Exegetically-Based Theology?*

All of the extant witnesses to monarchianism show that monarchian theology was thoroughly exegetical. Even though the author of the *Refutatio* tried to expunge all references to scripture in his accounts of monarchianism, scriptural exegesis was so thoroughly entwined with this theology that he was unsuccessful.[154] The monarchians relied on classic proclamations of monotheism from Deutero-Isaiah, Genesis, and Exodus to establish their fundamental commitment to protecting the uniqueness of God.[155]

Decker claims that the biblical exegesis attributed to the Noetians in *Contra Noetum* is a distorting insertion of Hippolytus.[156] His argument, however, is belied by the other witnesses to monarchianism from the early third century. The biblical exegesis Hippolytus attributes to his opponents addresses the same topics as versions of monarchian exegesis reported by the anti-monarchians (especially Old Testament theophanies), and it uses some of the same passages, such as John 10:30 and John 14:8–10. In his source-critical reconstruction of monarchianism, Decker has discarded what appears to be authentic content in an attempt to find the core of monarchianism.[157]

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154   See, for example, the quotation of John 14:11 in *Refutatio* 9.12.17–18. Note also that Hübner has shown some suggestive verbal parallels to Baruch 3:36–38 in *Refutatio* 9.10.11.

155   For a dense cluster of these passages, see Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 2.1–3.

156   Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 156–157.

157   Note that my rejection of Decker's claim is supported by Heine, who writes concerning the bias of the author of the *Refutatio*, "The selection itself of what to include and what to omit may reflect his bias. This is most obvious in the omission of the scriptural texts from which Callistus drew his views to make it appear that his doctrine was not derived from Scripture. That the modalists made abundant and effective use of Scripture is evident from (*a*) the account of Noetus' teachings in *CN* …, (*b*) Hippolytus' own remark about how Callistus supported his doctrine of the nature of the Church from Scripture (*Ref*. 9.12.22–23), and (*c*) the lengthy scriptural debates in which Tertullian and Origen engage against them" (Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 60).

3.3   *East vs. West?*

Michael Decker has also argued that monarchian theology and the responses to it are symptomatic of a divide between East and West in early Christianity. He contends that theologians from Asia Minor emphasized the unity of God in response to the theology of the Gnostics.[158] Although he does not call Irenaeus an outright monarchian, he notes that Irenaeus' theology has a number of similarities with the monarchians and is a good example of the theology of Asia Minor. Decker further characterizes theology from Asia Minor as being almost exclusively concerned with the action of God in salvation history, economic theology.[159] Rome serves as the epicenter of Western theology in Decker's narration. When the monarchians came to Rome from Asia Minor, he argues, they found theologians engaged in speculation about differentiation within the Godhead and accused them of being ditheists.[160] Rather than focusing on the unity of God in the economy of salvation, Decker avers, Roman theologians were preoccupied with ontological questions about the Godhead.[161]

Decker's geographical theory has a number of problems. In the first place, if there was such a large difference between the theologies of the East and West, how did Asian monarchian theology gain such a large following in Rome? Had the divide between East and West been as strong as Decker contends, monarchian theology would have gained no following in Rome. The primary sources paint a picture of a theology that found ready acceptance from both leaders and the "simple" Christians in Rome. In the second place, *Contra Noetum*, perhaps the earliest of the anti-monarchian treatises, was probably written in Asia Minor.[162] This probability complicates Decker's picture and suggests that there was within the theology of Asia Minor the type of diversity that Decker wants to split between East and West: both monarchian and anti-monarchian theologies arose in Asia Minor.

3.4   *Was Monarchianism the Privileging of Jewish Theology?*

Several scholars have suggested that monarchianism is best understood as a privileging of Jewish theology and a Jewish understanding of monotheism.

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158   Decker, "Die Monarchianer," 203–204.

159   Ibid., 204.

160   Ibid.

161   Ibid., 204–205, 208.

162   See Manlio Simonetti, "Aggiornamento Su Ippolito," in *Nuove ricerche su Ippolito*, Studia ephemeridis "Augustinianum" 30 (Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1989), 124–125; J.A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 116–123.

Uríbarri Bilbao, for example, understands monarchianism as a "Judaizing tendency" and an "attempt to maintain the monotheism inherited from the Jewish tradition."[163] More recently, Daniel Boyarin has pushed the alleged relationship between Judaism and monarchianism even further. He argues that monarchianism's defeat was Judaism being cast out of Christianity.[164] For Boyarin, the expulsion of monarchianism was one of the main ways that borders between Judaism and Christianity were "inscribed" and solidified.

Much of Boyarin's narration presupposes his understanding of Christianity and Judaism as an undifferentiated mass of "Judaeo-Christianity" in the second century.[165] Such a characterization is difficult to sustain in the monarchian controversy—if only on the basis of which texts were cited as authoritative. Both monarchian and anti-monarchian writers cited texts from the New Testament as authoritative, and both considered Jesus to be divine. Neither of these practices would have been acceptable for second-century Jews who did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Boyarin's theory also seems to presuppose some type of connection between monarchianism and rabbinic Judaism, but he never explains how such contact between Asian monarchians and early, Palestinian rabbis occurred. Furthermore, there are no clear textual or exegetical linkages between monarchianism and rabbinic Judaism.[166]

Uríbarri Bilbao's suggestion that monarchianism represents a Judaizing tendency within early Christianity is never elaborated. He merely claims that it is the defense of monotheism inherited from Judaism. His statements suggest a monolithic conception of monotheism within first- and second-century Judaism, but such characterizations of Jewish monotheism have been problematized by scholars since at least the late 1980s.[167] Tertullian does call the

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163   Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad*, 502. See also his list of four reasons he thinks Monarchianism is a return or defense of Jewish monotheism at p. 499.

164   Daniel Boyarin, "Two Powers in Heaven: Or, the Making of a Heresy," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 331–370; idem, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity*, Divinations (Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); idem, "Justin Martyr Invents Judaism," *Church History* 70, no. 3 (2001): 427–461.

165   See Boyarin's discussion of "Judaeo-Christianity" and his argument for its usefulness as a descriptor: "Justin Martyr Invents Judaism," 460–461.

166   For a further discussion and deconstruction of Boyarin's theory, see my article in *Vigiliae Christianae*: Stephen Waers, "Monarchianism and Two Powers: Jewish and Christian Monotheism at the Beginning of the Third Century," *Vigiliae Christianae* 70, no. 4 (September 30, 2016): 401–429.

167   See especially the work of Hurtado, Bauckham, Stuckenbruck, and Fossum, a full discussion of which is beyond the scope of this book. For the major works of Jarl Fossum on these issues, see: Jarl E. Fossum, "Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism," *Vigiliae*

Praxean theology "Jewish," but that fact proves only that Tertullian found the accusation of "Judaism" to be effective in anti-monarchian polemics.[168] Whether monarchian theology was underwritten by a specific stream of Jewish theology is an open question, but sweeping categorizations of monarchianism as "Jewish" or "Judaizing" are methodologically problematic and do little to advance our understanding of monarchianism.[169]

3.5   *The Development of Monarchianism and Geographical Schools*

Noting the differences in monarchian texts with regard to patripassianism, some scholars have suggested that there was a development within monarchianism. Heine, for example, argues that the early Asian school of monarchianism readily accepted patripassian conclusions while the later Roman school rejected patripassianism.[170] The move away from patripassianism in the *Refutatio* and parts of *Adversus Praxean* suggests that there was diversity regarding the acceptance of patripassianism within monarchianism. In the latest text, Novatian's *De Trinitate*, we see unabashed statements of patripassianism.[171]

Unfortunately, we do not have enough extant data to determine the cause of the variations regarding patripassianism in presentations of monarchianism

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Christianae 37, no. 3 (1983): 260–287; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 36 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1985); Jarl E. Fossum, "The New Religionsgeschichtliche Schule: The Quest for Jewish Christology," *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 30 (1991): 638–646; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology*, Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 30 (Freiburg; Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). See also Carey C. Newman, Gladys S. Lewis, and James R. Davila, eds., *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 63 (Leiden: Brill, 1999). See, among many others, Larry W. Hurtado, "What Do We Mean by 'First-Century Jewish Monotheism,'" *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers*, no. 32 (1993): 348–368; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 70 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995); Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*, Didsbury Lectures 1996 (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998).

168   See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 31.1, where Tertullian writes, "Moreover this matter is of Jewish faith, so to believe in one God as to refuse to count in with him the Son, and after the Son the Spirit" (trans. Evans, 179).

169   The monotheism of early third-century Christians was, of course, originally inherited from Judaism. Christian worship of Jesus as divine, however, caused it to develop in ways different from its Jewish roots.

170   Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 89.

171   See, for example, Novatian, *De Trinitate* 25.1.

by its opponents. To determine if the acceptance of patripassianism was a persistent, particularly Asian phenomenon, we would need a later Asian source to show that the acceptance of patripassianism survived in Asian monarchianism. To prove that the rejection of patripassianism by some monarchians was a peculiarly Roman phenomenon, we would either need to show that Novatian's testimony is incorrect or have other Roman sources that corroborated the portrait of Callistus in the *Refutatio*. As it stands, perhaps the most we can say is that there was variation within monarchianism, especially with regard to patripassianism. Whether this variation was geographically or chronologically characterized requires more data than we have.

3.6 *Summary of Monarchianism*

Monarchianism was a powerful theological movement that began in the late second century and continued well past the middle of the third. Although it seems to have originated in Asia Minor, it quickly gained influence in Rome. It was an important enough theological movement to merit rebuttals from several theologians in the third century. These anti-monarchian treatises give us our only glimpse into monarchian theology, and their polemical portrait leaves us with a meager amount of data from which to reconstruct that theology. Despite this lack of data, the few scholars who have treated monarchianism in any depth have advanced a number of broad theories.

As my appraisal of these theories has shown above, I consider many of them to be misguided or incomplete. They push the evidence too far or assume things for which there is no witness in the primary texts. Once these theories and narratives are stripped away, however, we are still able to ascertain a stable core of monarchian theology, which then allows us to determine what parts of monarchianism might have been variable. The establishment of this stable core of monarchianism is crucial for understanding the role monarchianism played in theological development and polemics in the early third century.

The most foundational tenet of monarchian theology, and the one that remains stable across all witnesses, is the strong affirmation that there is only one God. At the beginning of the third century, such claims were common. Both the monarchians and their opponents claimed to believe in only one God. The distinctive thing about the monarchian commitment to belief in only one God was that it interpreted the oneness of God in a manner that rejected the position held by their opponents, namely, that Jesus and the father were distinct realities and both God. The monarchians supported their understanding of the oneness of God with references to classic biblical affirmations of monotheism, like Isaiah 44:6.

The second core component of monarchian theology was the unwavering confession that Jesus was divine. The acceptance of the divinity of Jesus demarcated them from the psilanthropists, who also sought to preserve the oneness of God by denying that Jesus was God. Because the monarchians had an interpretation of monotheism that did not allow for two distinct realities to be God, they argued that the Father and Son were one and the same. In their monotheistic reasoning, if the Father was God, and the Son was God, then they were necessarily the same. Any argument affirming that both were distinct and divine was tantamount to ditheism in the eyes of the monarchians. Using this same logic, the monarchians focused on biblical theophanies and argued that one and the same God was both invisible and visible. This approach was a stark rejection of the way someone like Justin interpreted the Old Testament theophanies.

Despite the stable core of teachings just outlined, there was variety within monarchianism. Even from the limited attestation that we have, we know that monarchians after Noetus had mixed feelings about arguing that the Father suffered. Patripassianism can be seen as a necessary byproduct of the assertion that the Father and the Son are one and the same, and the anti-monarchian writers did not hesitate to point out this entailment. For reasons unknown to us, however, some monarchians rejected this conclusion and sought to preserve the impassibility of the Father.

As I demonstrate in the remaining chapters, the struggle against monarchianism catalyzed development in the language theologians used to speak about the distinction between the Father and Son. If only for this reason, the monarchians deserve a more prominent place in narrations of Trinitarian theology in the early third century than they now have. The monarchians, though, were more than a foil for the development of "proto-orthodox" theology. Their distinctive theology represents an earnest attempt to harmonize the claim that there is only one God with the affirmation that Jesus was also God.

Monarchianism, Origen's *Commentary on John*, and Wisdom Christology

1   Reading Origen *in Situ:* Origen and Monarchianism

Many modern accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology present him as moving along this or that trajectory toward the Nicene debates.[1] The focus on Origen's legacy in the Nicene debates brings with it questions that are foreign to the period in which Origen actually wrote, such as one of the main sorts of questions scholars like to ask regarding Origen: Did he teach that the Father and the Son were equal (with regard to divinity, power, substance, etc)? The work of Bruns and Ramelli is a good example of this tendency.[2] Origen's surroundings thus are only a blur receding into the distance. My approach to Origen in these final two chapters is an attempt to slow him down, an attempt to arrest his motion toward Nicaea so that his immediate, contemporary surroundings can come into sharper focus. A densely contextual reading is necessary to achieve this sharp focus. I undertake this reading by making three choices.

First, I attempt to isolate as much as possible one part of his polemical context in my examination of Origen: the monarchian controversy that spanned the first half of the third century.[3] The spate of anti-monarchian texts produced at the beginning of the third century demonstrates that monarchianism was perceived to be a serious threat by some notable theologians during this time.[4]

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1   Portions of this chapter appear in Stephen E. Waers, "Wisdom Christology and Monarchianism in Origen's Commentary on John," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 60, no. 3–4 (2015): 93–113. This material is reproduced with the permission of *GOTR*.

2   Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos: zur Gotteslehre des Origenes*, Adamantiana 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013); Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 1 (2011): 21–49.

3   As will become clear, it is not possible to completely isolate this controversy by considering Origen's thought only with reference to it. Origen did not write any exclusively anti-monarchian works like *Contra Noetum* or *Adversus Praxean*. His *Dialogue with Heraclides* is the closest he comes to doing so, but it is difficult to date precisely. The main work I consider, Origen's *Commentary on John*, was requested by his patron, Ambrose, as a response to the Valentinian Heracleon's commentary on the Gospel of John. Origen interacts with monarchian ideas in books 1–2 of *ComJn*, but the Valentinian polemical context is never too far out of view.

4   As the preceding reconstruction of monarchianism shows, these theologians included Hip-

The interplay between the monarchian controversy and the development of Origen's thought has not received its due attention from scholars.[5] One of the ways I bring monarchianism into focus is by reading Origen alongside other anti-monarchian writers from the early third century.[6] As I noted above, mine is a conscious decision to read Origen with his contemporaries rather than with his heirs in the Nicene debates.

Second, I focus my analysis almost exclusively on *ComJn* 1–2, books which Origen composed during the height of the monarchian controversy. These opening books of *ComJn* survive in well-preserved Greek.[7] This fact is important because even the transmission and preservation of Origen's works bears the mark of concern about Origen's relationship to post-Nicene orthodoxy.[8] The fact that these books are extant in a mostly complete Greek text, untouched by the editorial hand of Rufinus, makes them particularly valuable for reconstructing Origen's thought—particularly as it relates to Trinitarian matters.[9]

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polytus, Tertullian, the author of the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, and Novatian. I should note here that there is a substantial difference between the passages of Origen I examine and those of the other anti-monarchian writers. Origen was not writing an anti-monarchian treatise. He addresses monarchian theology within the context of a larger biblical commentary and so does not give a detailed account of many of the monarchian positions we saw in the other works.

5   There are a few notable exceptions to this trend: Antonio Orbe, "Orígenes y los monarquianos," *Gregorianum* 72, no. 1 (1991): 39–72; Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao, *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996); Ronald E. Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," *Journal of Theological Studies* 49 (1998): 56–91. As I noted in the introduction, Christoph Bruns makes a nod in this direction but never follows through on considering the full impact of monarchianism (or modalism, as he calls it) on Origen's thought. See Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*. Bilbao's account focuses on Origen's interaction with monarchianism in the *Dialogue with Heraclides*, but he does not give too much attention to *ComJn* 1–2.

6   In the last chapter, I read Origen alongside Tertullian and Novatian.

7   By "well-preserved Greek," I mean to highlight the fact that after the first two books of *ComJn*, the surviving text becomes very fragmentary. Compared to the later books of *ComJn*, there are relatively few *lacunae* in books 1–2.

8   I discuss this matter at length in my section on the reliability of the Trinitarian sections in Rufinus' translations of Origen's works in my final chapter. I conclude that, especially with regard to Trinitarian matters, Rufinus' translation renders Origen inoffensive to post-Nicene Latin readers.

9   Origen's *De principiis* is his most well-known work; and for this reason, many scholars privilege it in their accounts of Origen's Trinitarian theology. See, for example, how extensively Henri Crouzel relies on it: *Origen*, trans. A.S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 181–204. Charles Kannengiesser argues that the structure of *De principiis* itself shows the Trinitarian focus of the work: "Divine Trinity and the Structure of Peri Archon," in

Further motivating my choice to use these two books is the fact that I accept an early dating for their composition, beginning around 217 C.E. This dating means that these two books were composed in the middle of the monarchian controversy, with *Contra Noetum* (ca. 200–210) and *Adversus Praxean* (ca. 213) antedating them and the *Refutatio* (ca. 225–235) and *De Trinitate* (ca. 240–250) postdating them. This dating of the text, coupled with Origen's probable contact with monarchianism during his trip to Rome, suggests that the anti-monarchian polemical context is important for interpreting works he composed while still in Alexandria.[10]

Third, I explore one key theme in Origen's theology that, I argue, was formed through contact and conflict with monarchianism: the distinction of the Father and Son.[11] One of the most distinctive characteristics of monarchianism was its identification of the Father and the Son, the claim that they are "one and the same."[12] In the face of this identification of Father and Son, a careful articulation of their distinction was a pressing matter for anti-monarchian theologians at the beginning of the third century.[13] This imperative to distinguish the Father

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Origen of Alexandria: His World and His Legacy, ed. Charles Kannengiesser and William Lawrence Petersen, Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 1 (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 231–249. As I argue at length in my later section on Rufinus the translator, Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* distorts Origen's Trinitarian theology to make it conform to post-Nicene orthodoxy. Therefore, I use *De principiis* only when it agrees with what we see in the *ComJn*. Although Behr is more optimistic about the reliability of Rufinus' translation than I am, even he recognizes that Rufinus has modified passages that did not accord with later Trinitarian orthodoxy. Also motivating my decision regarding *De principiis* is the fact that it is something of an outlier with regard to genre. The vast majority of Origen's extant works are biblical commentaries, and it is only fitting to start with one of his earliest to begin an exploration of his Trinitarian theology.

10   I discuss the dating of the text and Origen's Roman travels in detail in the sections below.

11   The narrowing of the scope of this project to the relationship between the Father and Son in Origen's early works is meant to suggest neither that Origen had no substantial Pneumatology, as scholars like Harnack argue, nor that Origen's later works are of no importance. See Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 358. The length of my reconstruction of monarchianism in part one of the book precluded me from undertaking a pan-oeuvre study of Origen's Trinitarian theology in the present work. I hope that my focused study on Origen's early works here might serve as a good *Ausgangspunkt* for such a fuller study in the future.

12   For this claim, see especially *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11–12 and Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3: *maxime haec quae se existimat meram veritatem possidere dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum dicat.*

13   The anti-monarchian theologians thought the distinction of the Father and Son was a pressing matter for a number of reasons. As we see in *Contra Noetum* 2.4, 3.1, 4.2, and 9.3, Hippolytus thought that the distinction of the Father and Son was required by a proper

and Son was further complicated by the fact that early third-century theologians felt the need to avoid the kind of division of the Godhead they perceived in the Valentinian Pleroma.[14] They needed to determine how to speak of distinction without implying polytheistic separation.

My examination of the distinction of the Father and Son in Origen's early works consists of two dense examinations of passages from his *ComJn*.[15] Before these studies, I discuss the dating of *ComJn*, its Alexandrian milieu, and the anti-Valentinian context set by the request of his patron, Ambrose. In the first study, I analyze the ways in which monarchianism influenced Origen's interpretation of ἀρχή and λόγος in the opening verses of John's Gospel. I argue that Origen used the term ἀρχή to develop a Wisdom Christology that responded to the difficulties created by stoicized monarchian understandings of *Logos*. In the second study, I take up the question of Origen's subordinationism in relation to other anti-monarchian writers in the first half of the third century. I conclude that Origen, like his contemporaries, intentionally deployed a subordinationist model of the relationship between the Father and Son in order to safeguard the distinction of the Father and the Son.[16]

2   Dating the *Commentary on John*

Although scholars agree that Origen began his *ComJn* while he was still in Alexandria, they do not agree about precisely when this work was written. Dat-

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reading of scripture. Hippolytus was also concerned to stress that the Father did not suffer. See *Contra Noetum* 1.7, 8.3. Also motivating the anti-monarchian theologians was the fact that the *regula fidei* or *veritatis* spoke of one God and three (somethings), Father, Son, and Spirit. As will become clear in my discussion of Origen, he was concerned to protect the individuality (ἰδιότης) of the Son. Note also that Novatian's *De Trinitate* is really more of an exposition and defense of the *regula vertitatis* than a treatise on the Trinity.

14   This dual concern with monarchianism and Valentinianism is very evident in *Adversus Praxean* 3. There, Tertullian presents the monarchians and Valentinians as two poles on the spectrum of error regarding the relationship between the Father and Son. Note also that prior to its discussion of monarchianism, the *Refutatio omnium haeresium* has already surveyed a number of different Gnostic systems. At the beginning of the third century, Gnosticism was still very much a live issue for Christian theologians. I have elsewhere treated the question of whether there was any relationship, antagonistic or otherwise, between monarchianism and Gnosticism. See Waers, "Isaiah 44–45 and Competing Conceptions of Monotheism in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries."

15   My analysis here does not seek to be exhaustive. In each case, I focus on one major passage and note parallels when needed.

16   Thus, I continue to use the term "subordinationist;" but my usage seeks to disentangle it from the negative evaluative freight of post-Nicene orthodoxy.

ing *ComJn* is not made easier by the fact that "there are no cross-references between the *Commentary on John* and the other Alexandrian writings."[17] This lack of references to his other Alexandrian works problematizes any attempts to determine where *ComJn* fits in the sequence of Origen's work; and thus, we cannot feel secure in any judgments regarding the relation of dependence between *ComJn* and Origen's other writings. The one thing we can be relatively certain about regarding Origen's literary activity in Alexandria is that it came to a close in 231–232. Eusebius tells us that Origen left Alexandria during the tenth year of the reign of Alexander Severus.[18]

Despite the lack of any explicit dating by Origen or cross-references to other works, a few pieces of data can at least help us to narrow down the timeframe in which *ComJn* was most likely composed. Origen notes at the beginning of book six of *ComJn* that the previous five books had been composed in Alexandria.[19] Origen also makes two references at the beginning of book one that give us some hints for dating the work. First, he speaks of the fittingness of starting a commentary on the firstfruits of the Gospels immediately following a physical (κατὰ τὸ σῶμα) separation.[20] Origen then elaborates and speaks of his return to Alexandria.[21] While these statements seem to hint at some concrete events relative to which we can date the work, they are not as helpful as one would hope. Indeed, Origen made multiple trips while he lived in Alexandria. Unless we can determine to which of Origen's trips he is referring here, these references are not truly helpful in clarifying the date of the work.

To which physical separation and journey is Origen referring in *ComJn* 1.13? There are two possibilities for identifying the absence that preceded Origen's

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17   Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 86.

18   Eusebius, *EH* 6.26.

19   Origen, *ComJn* 6.1–12. Eusebius also recounts this fact in *EH* 6.23.1–24.2.

20   Origen, *ComJn* 1.12 (Greek from Origen, *Commentaire sur Saint Jean*, ed. Cécile Blanc, vol. 1 (livres I–V), Sources chrétiennes 120 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 64).

21   Origen, *ComJn* 1.13. In *ComJn* 1.12–13, he writes, "What more excellent activity ought there be after our physical separation from one another, than the careful examination of the gospel? For, indeed, one might dare say that the gospel is the firstfruits of all the scriptures. What other firstfruits of our activities ought there to have been, then, since we have come home to Alexandria, than that devoted to the firstfruits of the Scriptures?" (ποίαν ἐχρῆν εἶναι μετὰ τὸ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα κεχωρίσθαι ἡμᾶς ἀλλήλων διαφέρουσαν ἢ τὴν περὶ εὐαγγελίου ἐξέτασιν; Καὶ γὰρ τολμητέον εἰπεῖν πασῶν τῶν γραφῶν εἶναι ἀπαρχὴν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. Ἀπαρχὴν οὖν πράξεων, ἐξ οὗ τῇ Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἐπιδεδημήκαμεν, τίνα ἄλλην ἢ τὴν εἰς τὴν ἀπαρχὴν τῶν γραφῶν ἐχρῆν γεγονέναι;). Translation from Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 34. Greek from SC 120:64.

work on *ComJn*. Both of these possibilities hinge on interpretations of Euse-
bius' rather laconic, enigmatic, and imprecise description of "no small war-
fare breaking out in the city" (οὐ σμικροῦ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἀναρριπισθέντος πολέ-
μου).[22] Nautin identifies this "warfare" with Origen's conflict with his bishop,
Demetrius: *La 'guerre' qui l'a contraint à quitter Alexandrie n'était probable-
ment rien d'autre que cette hostilité qui s'était déclarée contre lui dans l'entourage
de l'évêque*[23] Eusebius recounts amicable relations between Origen and De-
metrius earlier in Origen's career, even claiming that Demetrius installed Ori-
gen alone as the head of the catechetical school in Alexandria.[24] Nautin's inter-
pretation of the "warfare" would push Origen's work on *ComJn* toward the
end of his Alexandrian period when his relationship with Demetrius seems
to have deteriorated.[25] From this assumption, Nautin gives the following dat-
ing proposal: 229—*De Prin.* composed; 230—Origen takes a trip to Palestine;
231—Origen composes books 1–4 of *ComJn*; winter 231/232—Origen departs to
Antioch and composes book 5 of *ComJn*.[26] Nautin's dating, which pushes *ComJn*
to the very end of Origen's time in Alexandria, means that all of Origen's other
Alexandrian works were composed earlier than *ComJn*.[27]

The alternative understanding of Eusebius' statement is given by Heine and
Preuschen. Because Heine sums up Preuschen's work so well, I treat Heine's
argument as representative of this view.[28] Heine finds it quite unlikely that

22   Eusebius, *EH* 6.19.16 (Greek and trans. from Eusebius, *EH: Books 6–10*, ed. J.E.L. Oulton,
      Loeb Classical Library 265 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 62–63.).

23   Pierre Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son œuvre*, Christianisme antique 1 (Paris: Beauchesne,
      1977), 366.

24   Eusebius, *EH* 6.3.8.

25   At least one factor in the deterioration of Origen's relationship with Demetrius was
      his ordination, not under the auspices of Demetrius, by the bishops of Caesarea and
      Jerusalem (see Eusebius, *EH* 6.8.4). In Nautin's dating schema, this event would give us an
      early time at which conflict between Origen and Demetrius was increasing. Even still, we
      cannot date Origen's ordination with any precision and are no closer to a date for the work.
      In his relatively recent treatment of Origen, John Behr follows Nautin's dating. His work
      was produced well before Heine's reassessment, and Behr does not mention Preuschen's
      earlier suggestions. See John Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, The Formation of Christian Theology
      1 (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 167.

26   Nautin, *Origène*, 371.

27   Ibid., 366–367. Nautin's dating was a substantial revision of the paradigm that had pre-
      vailed before him. Indeed, he is well aware that his proposal is overturning the argument
      of Preuschen. He notes that (unnamed) scholars had taken Origen's reference to *ComJn* as
      the first fruits of his works since the return to Alexandria as meaning that this was the the
      first of Origen's literary efforts.

28   For Preuschen's argument, see Origen, *Origenes Werke: Der Johanneskommentar*, ed. Erwin
      Preuschen, vol. 4, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 10

Eusebius' statement about warfare breaking out in the city would refer to the disagreement between Origen and Demetrius. If Eusebius were describing the disagreement between Origen and Demetrius, he would be suggesting that the whole city was embroiled in the controversy, which is highly unlikely.[29] Instead, Heine understands Eusebius' statement to be referring to Origen's stealthy departure from Alexandria to escape Caracalla's massacre in 215.[30] This understanding of Eusebius' statement makes his claim that warfare broke out in the city much more intelligible than a skirmish between a bishop and a theologian. The upshot of this dating is that the date of composition of the first books of *ComJn* is moved back to sometime around 217, soon after Caracalla had left the city and Origen had time to return.[31] Heine notes the full import of this dating:

> This way of reading the texts also makes the *Commentary on John* the first of Origen's Biblical commentaries. Origen would have been in his

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(Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1903), lxxvi–lxxxi. Heine's views on the dating of books 1–2 of *ComJn* have shifted during his career. In his introduction to *ComJn* in 1989, Heine follows Nautin's proposal and dates the work as follows: "This would place the composition of the first four books in Alexandria in A.D. 230–231, and part, at least, of Book 5 in Antioch in A.D. 231–232" ("Introduction," in *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*, Fathers of the Church 80 [Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989], 4). Although he does not explicitly revise his dating of *ComJn*, Heine argues in 1993 that Origen was responding to monarchianism at the beginning of *ComJn*, a key point in his later reappraisal of the dating ("Stoic Logic as Handmaid to Exegesis and Theology in Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of John," *Journal of Theological Studies* 44, no. 1 [1993]: 92–100). In his 1998 article, Heine suggests, "The first two books [of *ComJn*] were written soon after Origen returned from Rome, and are largely structured by the modalist question" ("The Christology of Callistus," 58). This statement appears to mark the point where Heine's views on the dating of the work definitively shifted to an early date, following Preuschen.

29 Heine finds Nautin's suggestion implausible on linguistic grounds, among others. See Heine, *Origen*, 87 n. 20, where he writes, "There are two points in Eusebius' account which I think point to Caracalla's massacre. First is Eusebius' statement that this warfare broke out 'in the city' (*kata tēn polin*). This suggests something larger than a dispute between the bishop and a teacher. The other is the verb Eusebius chooses to designate Origen's departure—*hupexerchesthai*. The usual meaning of this word is a secret, unnoticed departure (see, for example, Josephus, *Antiquities* 14.16). I can see no reason for Origen's departure to have been secretive had he been leaving because of Demetrius' animosity towards him. But if it refers to his departure at the time when Caracalla's army was slaughtering the inhabitants of Alexandria randomly and at will, it would have had to be secretive."

30 Heine, *Origen*, 87. On pp. 87–88, Heine gives a detailed explanation of Caracalla's massacre. Caracalla seems to have erected statues portraying himself as Alexander the Great, some of which might have been destroyed in a riot in Alexandria. Upon arrival, Caracalla was incensed at the destruction of the statues and began a massacre that lasted for some time.

31 Heine, *Origen*, 88.

early thirties when he began work on the commentary. He begins his literary career by trying to sort out the thorny Christological issues centered largely on the Gospel of John which divided the late second-and early third-century church.[32]

The two dating proposals that deal with the majority of the evidence at length, then, give us very different conclusions.[33] Nautin's scheme places *ComJn* after Origen's other Alexandrian works, while that of Preuschen and Heine puts the composition at the very beginning of Origen's literary endeavors. There are various other suggestions for the dating of *ComJn*, but Nautin and Heine/Preuschen contain the fullest discussions.[34] I find Heine and Preuschen's argument convincing, especially its treatment of the "warfare" Eusebius mentions.

3   The Alexandrian Milieu of the *Commentary on John*

While Origen's *De prin.* draws the attention of a number of scholars, we would do well to remember that his exposition of the Christian faith in this work was not typical of the mode in which he theologized. Indeed, Heine notes that apart from *De Prin.*, *Contra Celsum*, and a few other works, "Origen did his theology by writing commentaries on the canonical scriptures of the Church in the manner that his contemporaries who were Aristotelian or Platonic philosophers did their philosophy by writing commentaries on the works of earlier

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32   Ibid., 89.

33   Neither of these dominant dating schemes, however, damages my thesis that Origen's distinction of the Father and Son was motivated by his contact with monarchianism. Even the late dating of *ComJn* 1–2 still places it in the middle of the monarchian controversy and puts it before Novatian's *De Trinitate*.

34   In his 1994 article, John Anthony McGuckin dates the first books of *ComJn* to 230/231: "Structural Design and Apologetic Intent in Origen's Commentary on John," in *Origeniana Sexta* (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1995), 444 n. 9. Later, he changes his position and dates them to between 226 and 229: John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen*, 1st ed, The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 29. Johannes Quasten dates books 1–4 to between 226 and 229: *Patrology* (Utrecht: Spectrum, 1950), 2.49. Hans Georg Thümmel dates the work to the late 220s or by 230: Thümmel, ed., *Origenes' Johanneskommentar, Buch I–V*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 63 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 4. Marguérite Harl notes that Eusebius' statement is "très vague" and asserts that books 1–2 of *ComJn* were written either contemporaneously with or just before *De Prin.*: Marguerite Harl, *Origène et la fonction révélatrice du Verbe incarné*, Patristica Sorbonensia 2 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1958), 121.

philosophers."[35] In Eusebius' list of the works Origen composed in Alexandria, the majority are biblical commentaries.[36]

If the biblical commentary was Origen's preferred theological medium, he gave the Gospel of John pride of place among all the other scriptures. By doing so, he was conforming to the pattern that prevailed in Alexandria in the late second and early third centuries.[37] Eusebius attributes the following opinion to Origen's predecessor, Clement: "But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospels, was urged on by his disciples, and, divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."[38] Origen himself states, "We might dare say, then, that the Gospels are the firstfruits of all the Scriptures, but that the firstfruits of the Gospels is that according to John, whose meaning no one may understand who has not leaned on Jesus' breast nor received Mary from Jesus to be his mother also."[39] Heine notes that Origen does not allegorize anything contained in the first five verses of John's Gospel.[40] This restraint on Origen's part is somewhat surprising, especially given his fondness for figurative reading. What leads him to restraint here? It is likely that he shared the opinion of Clement that John's was a spiritual Gospel, that it soared above the rudimentary foundations laid by the synoptics. If John's Gospel already led people to contemplate the spiritual, the very goal of allegory, there was no need to allegorize.[41]

4 Ambrose and the Anti-valentinian Context

Origen produced the *ComJn* at the request of his patron Ambrose, whom he addresses at multiple points in the *Commentary*.[42] Although Origen does not

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35   Heine, *Origen*, 83.
36   Eusebius, *EH* (*EH*) 6.24.1–3 (LCL 265:71–73). Eusebius lists the following works: *Commentary on the Gospel of John, Commentary on Genesis, Commentary on Psalms 1–25, Commentary on Lamentations, De Principiis, On the Resurrection*, and *Stromateis*. Eusebius also indicates that Origen began work on the *Hexapla* while still in Alexandria: *EH* 6.16.
37   The privileging of John's Gospel was by no means confined to Alexandria. See, for example, *Adversus Praxean* 21–25, which reads almost like a commentary on the Gospel of John.
38   Eusebius, *EH* 6.14.7 (trans. LCL 265:49).
39   Origen, *ComJn* 1.23 (trans. FC 80:38). See also *ComJn* 1.21.
40   Heine, "Introduction," 21.
41   Although not related, I suspect that something similar to this is happening in Basil's refusal to allegorize in his *Hexaemeral Homilies*.
42   For references to Ambrose, see: Origen, *ComJn* 1.9, 2.1, 6.6, 13.1, 20.1, 28.6, 32.2.

refer to Ambrose by name, he speaks of someone urging him to examine the
Gospel of John.[43] Eusebius tells us that Ambrose supplied Origen with multi-
ple stenographers and copyists, a luxury he would not have enjoyed without his
patron.[44] Eusebius also writes the following about Ambrose: "At this time also
Ambrose, who held the views of the heresy of Valentinus, was refuted by the
truth as presented by Origen, and, as if his mind were illuminated by light, gave
his adhesion to the true doctrine as taught by the Church."[45] Jerome, however,
suggests that Ambrose was a follower of Marcion before being converted by
Origen.[46] Heine argues that Eusebius was correct and that, as an Alexandrian,
it is more likely that Ambrose would have been a follower of Valentinus than of
Marcion.[47]

Since Ambrose had only recently converted from Valentinianism, it is no
surprise that he commissioned Origen to write a commentary on the Gospel
of John.[48] It is likely that in addition to supplying Origen with stenographers
and copyists, Ambrose provided Origen with a copy of Heracleon's Valentinian
commentary on the Gospel of John.[49] The Gospel of John was a favorite gospel
of Valentinians.[50] Irenaeus' record of the teaching of Ptolemaeus the Valen-

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43   Origen, *ComJn* 1.21: "But I think that John's Gospel, which you have enjoined us to examine
to the best of our ability, is the firstfruits of the Gospels. It speaks of him whose descent
is traced, and begins from him who is without a genealogy" (ἀπαρχὴν τῶν εὐαγγελίων εἶναι
τὸ προστεταγμένον ἡμῖν ὑπὸ σοῦ κατὰ δύναμιν ἐρευνῆσαι, τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην, τὸν γενεαλογού-
μενον εἰπὸν καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀγενεαλογήτου ἀρχόμενον). Translation from FC 80:121; Greek from
SC 120:68.

44   Eusebius, *EH* 6.23.1–2 (LCL 265:69). See also Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 61.3.

45   Eusebius, *EH* 6.18.1 (trans. LCL 265:55).

46   Jerome, *De viris illustribus* 56.1. "ambrosius, primum marcionites, dein ab origene correc-
tus, ecclesiae diaconus et confessionis dominicae gloria insignis fuit." Latin from Jerome
and Gennadius, *Hieronymus: liber De viris inlustribus; Gennadius: liber De viris inlustribus.*,
ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchrist-
lichen Literatur 14 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1896), 34. Jerome repeats this claim that Ambrose
was a follower of Marcion in *De viris illustribus* 61.3.

47   Heine, "Introduction," 6 n. 22.

48   Eusebius, *EH* 6.18.1 (LCL 265:55); Heine, *Origen*, 95.

49   Ibid., 91. See also Heine's discussion of Heracleon and the *Tripartite Tractate*: Heine, "Intro-
duction," 23–26.

50   Elaine H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on
John*, Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 17 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973),
16–17. T.E. Pollard suggests that one reason there is little explicit quotation of the Gospel
by proto-orthodox Christians before the end of the second century is that the Gospel was
used heavily by Gnostics. See his *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, Society for
New Testament Studies; Monograph Series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1970), 24–25.

tinian focuses on the opening verses of John's Gospel.[51] In Irenaeus' account, Ptolemaeus focused on many of the same Christological titles that Origen dwells on at length in the opening books of *ComJn*.[52]

Although the refutation of Heracleon's Valentinian commentary on the Gospel of John is ostensibly the motivation for Origen's composition of *ComJn*, there are only two references to Heracleon's commentary in the first two books of *ComJn*. The first reference to Heracleon does not occur until about halfway through book two of *ComJn*.[53] Heine argues that despite the scant references to Heracleon in books 1–2 of *ComJn*, Origen is still addressing Valentinian views.[54] As Irenaeus' account of Ptolemaus' teaching shows, the interpretation of ἀρχή was a critical part of the Valentinian understanding of the Ogdoad.[55] Origen's fixation on determining the proper meaning of ἀρχή in book one of *ComJn* is most likely intended to guard against Valentinian interpretations.[56] However, Origen's discussions of ἀρχή also have utility for anti-monarchian polemic.

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51 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5. I use the term "Valentinian" here, as elsewhere, fully aware that it is perhaps an oversimplification. To be sure, the fragments we have that are thought to accurately reflect the thought of Valentinus himself lack many of the features of later "Valentinians." Thus, we ought not assume that all who are called "Valentinians" are representative of the thought of Valentinus. See Heine, *Origen*, 53–54. See also the thorough treatment of Valentinianism and all of the attendant complexities in Einar Thomassen, *The Spiritual Seed: The Church of the Valentinians*, Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

52 Among those Irenaeus discusses in *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5 are the following: beginning, life, *logos*, truth, God.

53 Origen, *ComJn* 2.100–104. Here Origen is refuting Heracleon's interpretation of John 1:3: "All things were made through him." Shortly afterward, Origen refutes Heracleon's interpretation of John 1:4: "What was made in him was life." For an examination of all of Heracleon's fragments in *ComJn*, see Heracleon, *The Fragments of Heracleon: Newly Edited from the Mss. with an Introduction and Notes*, ed. Alan England Brooke, 1st Gorgias Press ed, Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature, 1, no. 4 (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2004). Note, however, that Brooke's numbering of the text does not match that of Blanc and Thümmel since his text was produced well before the newer critical editions.

54 Heine, *Origen*, 92.

55 Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5. So also Heine, *Origen*, 94–95.

56 For a good example, see *ComJn* 1.111–118, where Origen's discussion focuses on terms important for Valentinian pleromatology: *arche, logos, sophia*, and *demiourgos*. While the Valentinians took all of these terms to represent different Aeons, Origen collapses all of them together and unifies them in the Son. This move is almost assuredly motivated by his opposition to the Valentinian exegesis of the prologue to the Gospel of John.

5 Monarchianism and Book 1 of the *Commentary on John*

At multiple points in *ComJn*, Origen bemoans the fact that many people have unduly fixated on the title *Logos* for Christ. He wishes that they would consider it as one title among many. He states,

> But let us consider more carefully what the Word is which is in the beginning. I frequently marvel when I consider the things said about the Christ by some who wish to believe in him. Why in the world, when countless names are applied to the Savior, do they pass by most of them in silence? Even if they should perhaps remember them, they do not interpret them in their proper sense, but say that these name him figuratively. On the other hand, they stop in the case of the title "Word" alone, as if they say that the Christ of God is "Word" alone; and they do not investigate, consistent with the rest of the names, the meaning of what is indicated by the term "Word."[57]

After surveying the many titles ascribed to Christ, he further specifies what troubles him about his opponents' fixation on the title *Logos*:

> It is worthwhile to consider those who disregard so many names and treat this one as special. And again they look for an explanation in the case of the other names, if someone brings them to their attention, but in the case of this one they believe they have a clear answer to what the Son of God is, when he is named Word. This is especially obvious since they continually use this verse, 'My heart uttered a good word,' (Ps. 44:2 LXX) as though they think the Son of God is an expression of the Father occurring in syllables. And in accordance with this view, if we inquire of them carefully, they do not give him ὑπόστασιν, neither do they make clear his οὐσίαν. I do not yet mean that it is this or that, but in what manner he has οὐσίαν. For it is impossible for anyone to understand a proclaimed word to be a son. Let them declare to us that God the

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[57] Origen, *ComJn* 1.125 (trans. FC 80:59–60): Ἴδωμεν δ' ἐπιμελέστερον τίς ὁ ἐν αὐτῇ λόγος. Θαυμάζειν μοι πολλάκις ἐπέρχεται σκοποῦντι τὰ ὑπό τινων πιστεύειν εἰς τὸν Χριστὸν βουλομένων λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτοῦ, τί δήποτε δυσεξαριθμήτων ὀνομάτων τασσομένων ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν τὰ μὲν πλεῖστα παρασιωπῶσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἴ ποτε μνήμη αὐτῶν γένοιτο, μεταλαμβάνουσιν οὐ κυρίως ἀλλὰ τροπικῶς ταῦτα αὐτὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι, ἐπὶ δὲ μόνης τῆς λόγος προσηγορίας ἱστάμενοι οἱονεὶ "λόγον" μόνον φασὶν εἶναι τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὐχὶ ἀκολούθως τοῖς λοιποῖς τῶν ὀνομαζομένων ἐρευνῶσι τοῦ σημαινομένου τὴν δύναμιν ἐκ τῆς "λόγος" φωνῆς. Greek from SC 120:124.

Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with *ousia*.[58]

Scholars have suggested multiple possibilities for Origen's opponents in this passage. Often drawing on a passage from Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses* 2.28.5, some have argued that Origen is addressing Valentinian positions here.[59] Others have suggested that Origen is addressing a monarchian reading of Psalm 44:2 (LXX).[60] Ronald Heine writes, "The difference between the Logos theolo-

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58 Origen, *ComJn* 1.151–152 (trans. FC 80:64–65 with modifications). Καὶ ἔστιν ἄξιον ἐπιστῆσαι τοῖς τὰ τοσαῦτα τῶν ὀνομαζομένων παραπεμπομένοις καὶ τούτῳ ὡς ἐξαιρέτῳ χρωμένοις καὶ πάλιν ἐπ' ἐκείνοις μὲν διήγησιν ζητοῦσιν, εἴ τις αὐτοῖς προσάγοι αὐτά, ἐπὶ δὲ τούτῳ ὡς σαφὲς προσιε-μένοις τὸ τί ποτέ ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὀνομαζόμενος, καὶ μάλιστα ἐπεὶ συνεχῶς χρῶνται τῷ· "Ἐξηρεύξατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν", οἰόμενοι προφορὰν πατρικὴν οἰονεὶ ἐν συλλαβαῖς κειμένην εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ὑπόστασιν αὐτῷ, εἰ ἀκριβῶς αὐτῶν πυνθανοί-μεθα, οὐ διδόασιν οὐδὲ οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ σαφηνίζουσιν, οὐδέπω φαμὲν τοιάνδε ἢ τοιάνδε, ἀλλ' ὅπως ποτὲ οὐσίαν. (152.) Λόγον γὰρ ἀπαγγελλόμενον υἱὸν εἶναι νοῆσαι καὶ τῷ τυχόντι ἐστὶν ἀμήχανον. Καὶ λόγον τοιοῦτον καθ' αὑτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἤτοι οὐ κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ μὴ ὑφεστάναι οὐδὲ υἱὸν τυγχάνοντα ἢ καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν θεὸν λόγον. Greek from SC 120:134–136.

59 See Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 3 (2012): 313–314; Christoph Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 62–63; Cécile Blanc in Origen, *Commentaire sur Saint Jean*, 1 (livres I–V):136. Blanc suggests that Irenaeus' report in *Adversus haereses* 2.28.5 elucidates Origen's pas-sage. Irenaeus writes, "But ye pretend to set forth His generation from the Father, and ye transfer the production of the word of men which takes place by means of a tongue to the Word of God, and thus are righteously exposed by your own selves as knowing neither things human nor divine" (Vos autem generationem eius ex patre divinantes et verbi hominum per linguam factam prolationem transferentes in verbum Dei, iuste dete-gimini a vobis ipsis quod neque humana neque divina noveritis). Trans. ANF 1.400–401; Latin from Irenaeus, *Contre les hérésies: Livre II*, ed. Adelin Rousseau and Louis Doutre-leau, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 294 (Paris: Cerf, 1982), 282. Ronald Heine has recently supported this view and shown how Ptolemaus appears to have focused on the term *logos*, according to Irenaeus' report in *Adversus haereses* 1.8.5. He argues that this focus would make sense of Origen's comments in *ComJn* 1.125. See Heine, *Origen*, 94–96. Elsewhere, however, Heine notes that the interpretation of Psalm 44:2 was a point of disagreement between the "Logos theologians" and the "modalists." See Heine, "The Christology of Cal-listus," 64.

60 Antonio Orbe, in agreement with Eugenio Corsini, shows the parallels between Origen's opponents and monarchian exegesis before suggesting that Origen also "has his sights set on a domestic exegesis, like that of Tertullian." See Orbe, "Orígenes y los Monarquianos," 54–56; Origen, *Commento al Vangelo di Giovanni*, ed. and trans. Eugenio Corsini, Clas-sici della filosofia 3 (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1968), 160–161, n. 45.

gians and the modalists lay in the definition of the Logos as either substantial or insubstantial, and this difference was debated exegetically, as both Tertullian and Origen show, in relation to Ps. 44:2."[61] The latter group of scholars often notes that Origen appears to be addressing both the position of the monarchians and the teaching of someone like Tertullian.[62] Part of the difficulty of determining the identity of Origen's opponents in this passage is that Origen's interpretation takes place within a crowded polemical landscape. We know that the monarchians relied heavily on passages from the Gospel of John, especially John 10:30 and 14:8–10.[63] At the beginning of the *Dialogue with Heraclides*, Heraclides quotes John 1:1–3 as a statement of his belief, thus demonstrating that the Johannine prologue could also be a focal point for someone who subscribed to monarchian views.[64] We also know that the Johannine prologue was a focal point of Valentinian theology.[65] Even more, the Gospel of John was important for theologians like Origen and Tertullian, who worked to refute both Valentinianism and monarchianism.[66] In short, the Gospel of John was central to the theology of many of the major Christians groups at the beginning of the third century.[67] In what follows, I focus on one side of the

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Thümmel notes the similarity to monarchianism: *Origenes' Johanneskommentar, Buch I–V*, 221–222. In his earlier article, Heine, following Orbe, argues that Origen appears to be addressing the positions of both the monarchians and someone like Tertullian in this passage ("The Christology of Callistus," 65–66). Perhaps the various solutions are not mutually exclusive. On the one hand, Tertullian's attribution of a similar interpretation of Ps. 44:2 to the monarchians in *Adversus Praxean* is the closest parallel to Origen's passage that we have. Therefore, it is probable that Origen was addressing the monarchians in this passage. On the other hand, the resonances with the passages from *Adversus haereses* describing Valentinianism are evocative and should not be dismissed.

61   Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 64.

62   The part of the "domestic exegesis" of someone like Tertullian that Origen would find troublesome is that it can be considered a two-stage Logos theology. For example, Tertullian speaks of the "perfect nativity of the Word" (nativitas perfecta sermonis dum ex Deo procedit) occurring when God says "*Fiat lux*" in Gen. 1:3. See, *Adversus Praxean* 7.1 (*Tertulliani Opera: Pars II*, ed. A. Kroymann and Ernest Evans, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 2 [Turnholt: Brepols, 1954], 1165). Tertullian's exegesis would be problematic for Origen because he wants to stress that the Son has always been alongside the Father. See *De prin.* 1.2.2; *ComJn* 10.246. Behr draws attention to Origen's insistence that the Son has always been with the Father: (*The Way to Nicaea*, 185, 193).

63   See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 4.7, 7.1, and 7.4–5; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20.1; Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.1, 28.1–5.

64   Origen, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 1.

65   As demonstrated, for example, in Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.8.5.

66   See, for example, Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 20–25. In these chapters, Tertullian relies heavily on the Gospel of John to articulate his position against that of the Praxeans.

67   T.E. Pollard writes, "I believe that it was St John's Gospel, with its Logos-concept in the

polemical context (anti-monarchian) of books 1–2 of Origen's *ComJn*, which focus on the opening verses of John's Gospel.[68]

After the passage quoted above, Origen repeats that these opponents interpret the title *Logos* literally although they understand many of the other titles of Christ figuratively.[69] Later, after another lengthy excursus on the names of Christ, Origen again punctuates his discussion by countering the claims of his opponents, saying,

> We have said all these things wishing to show the random and unexamined procedure followed by many interpreters. Although so many names are applied to Christ, they stop with the term 'Word' alone, and do not investigate why 'the Son of God' has been recorded to be the Word, God, who was in the beginning with the Father, through whom all things came into being.[70]

Again, the problem is that its opponents privilege the title *Logos* and do not consider the reason the Son is called *Logos*.

At the end of book one of *ComJn*, Origen returns to interpretation of Ps. 44:2 and says that his opponents cite it frequently as if they understood it.[71] Origen does not give us more detail about his opponents' interpretation of this verse, only complaining that they interpret literally the word mentioned in it as an expression occurring in syllables.[72] Tertullian, however, discusses Ps. 44:2 at multiple points in *Adversus Praxean*. He himself uses this verse to describe the generation of the Son and summarizes his opponents' position: "For what, you will say, is a word except voice and oral sound and (as the grammarians' tradition has it) smitten air intelligible in the hearing, for the rest an empty

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Prologue and its emphasis on the Father-Son relationship, that raised in a most acute way the problems which led the church to formulate her doctrines of the trinity and of the person of Christ" (*Johannine Christology and the Early Church*, xi).

68 I leave aside the discussion of Origen's anti-Valentinian motive here in order to keep this chapter focused and concise.

69 Origen, *ComJn* 1.154.

70 Origen, *ComJn* 1.266 (trans. FC 80:88): Ταῦτα δὲ ἡμῖν πάντα εἴρηται τὸ τῶν πολλῶν ἀποκληρωτικὸν καὶ ἀβασάνιστον ἐλέγξαι βουλομένοις, ὅτι τοσούτων ὀνομάτων εἰς αὐτὸν ἀναφερομένων ἵστανται ἐπὶ μόνης τῆς "λόγος" ὀνομασίας, οὐκ ἐξετάζοντες, τί δήποτε λόγος εἶναι θεὸς ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, ἀναγέγραπται "⟨ὁ⟩ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ". Greek from SC 120:194.

71 Origen, *ComJn* 1.280.

72 Again, see *ComJn* 1.151 for those who interpret *Logos* as an "expression of God occurring in syllables" (trans. FC 80:64).

something, void and incorporal?"[73] Later, when Tertullian takes up this psalm
again, he clarifies the monarchian position:

> Just as I allege as spoken by God, *My heart hath disgorged a good Word*,
> against this do you object that God somewhere said, My heart hath dis-
> gorged myself as a good word, so that he himself may be both he who
> disgorged and what he disgorged, himself both he who brought forth and
> he who was brought forth, if he himself is Word and God.[74]

Heine ably treats these passages in his article on Callistus' Christology, detail-
ing the philosophical underpinnings of monarchian teaching on the *Logos* as
it relates to Psalm 44:2:[75]

> If we view the statement in Ps. 44:2 from a Stoic standpoint, then the
> exegetical argument of the modalists becomes clear. The Stoics distin-
> guished between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (reason) and λόγος προφόρικος (speech).
> Ps. 44:2 is clearly about the latter .... Consequently when the term Logos
> was used of Christ in the sense of λόγος προφόρικος it could only refer to
> a spoken word (φωνή, *vox* or *sonus oris*) from a Stoic standpoint. And this
> is precisely what Tertullian and Origen accuse the modalists of saying in
> their exegesis of Ps. 44:2.[76]

It is most likely to this interpretation of Psalm 44:2 that Origen is referring when
he speaks of those who think the Son is an expression of the Father occur-
ring in syllables. Heine notes that the Stoic understanding of *Logos* used by
the monarchians was unpalatable to Origen, Tertullian, and the author of the
Refutatio because it treated *Logos* as a category of speech, not a category of

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73   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.6 (trans. Evans, 137–138): *Quid est enim, dices, sermo, nisi uox
      et sonus oris et, sicut grammatici tradunt, aer offensus intelligibilis auditu, ceterum uacuum
      nescio quid et inane et incorporale?* Latin from CCSL 2:1166.

74   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.2 (trans. Evans, 143): *Sicut ego profero dictum a Deo:* Eruc-
      tauit cor meum sermonem optimum, *haec tu contra opponas alicubi dixisse Deum: 'Eruc-
      tauit me cor meum sermonem optimum', ut ipse sit qui et eructauit et quod eructauit et ipse
      qui protulerit et qui prolatus sit si ipse est et sermo et deus.* Latin from CCSL 2:1170–1171.

75   Heine also notes that the foregrounding of the *Logos* concept in Callistus' theology is prob-
      ably the work of the author of the *Refutatio*. Heine argues that spirit was probably a more
      important concept for Callistus' theology. See "The Christology of Callistus," 64.

76   Ibid., 66. Note, however, that Mark J. Edwards does not think this distinction was as much
      of a Stoic commonplace as some posit: "Clement of Alexandria and His Doctrine of the
      Logos," *Vigiliae Christianae* 54, no. 2 (2000): 161–162.

ontology.[77] Tertullian complains that his opponents' understanding of the word makes it "void and incorporeal" (*inane et incorporale*) and counters that what proceeds from substance must have substance.[78]

Origen's characterization of his opponents' error fits well with Tertullian's testimony. Recall that in the passage I quoted above, Origen wrote that his opponents interpreted Psalm 44:2

> as though they think the Son of God is an expression of the Father occurring in syllables. And in accordance with this view, if we inquire of them carefully, they do not give him ὑπόστασιν, neither do they make clear his οὐσίαν. I do not yet mean that it is this or that, but in what manner he has οὐσίαν. For it is impossible for anyone to understand a proclaimed word to be a son. Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with *ousia*.[79]

Origen criticizes his opponents for denying *ousia* to the *prophora*, which is here the *Logos*.[80] This criticism is very similar to Tertullian's complaint that his opponents understand the Word as something "void and incorporeal."[81] The Stoicized *Logos* theology of their opponents allowed them to interpret the *Logos* as something without a distinct existence or substance—which would therefore not endanger the oneness of God.

This background for the interpretation of Psalm 44:2 elucidates why Origen and Tertullian are concerned with it. When substance is denied to the *Logos*, it is much easier to claim that the *Logos* is not distinct from the Father. An

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77   Heine, "The Christology of Callistus," 66.

78   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.6. Note also that Tertullian's materialist understanding of God as spirit is probably influencing his critique here. See René Braun, *Deus christianorum: Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed., Collection des Études augustiniennes 70 (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1977), 149.

79   Origen, *ComJn* 1.151–152 (trans. FC 80:64–65 with modifications). οἰόμενοι προφορὰν πατρικὴν οἰονεὶ ἐν συλλαβαῖς κειμένην εἶναι τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο ὑπόστασιν αὐτῷ, εἰ ἀκριβῶς αὐτῶν πυνθανοίμεθα, οὐ διδόασιν οὐδὲ οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ σαφηνίζουσιν, οὐδέπω φαμὲν τοιάνδε ἢ τοιάνδε, ἀλλ' ὅπως ποτὲ οὐσίαν. (152.) Λόγον γὰρ ἀπαγγελλόμενον υἱὸν εἶναι νοῆσαι καὶ τῷ τυχόντι ἐστὶν ἀμήχανον. Καὶ λόγον τοιοῦτον καθ' αὑτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἤτοι οὐ κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ μὴ ὑφεστάναι οὐδὲ υἱὸν τυγχάνοντα ἢ καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν θεὸν λόγον. Greek from SC 120:134–136.

80   As I note later, Origen appears to be guarding against just the sort of tendency in his discussion of wisdom in *De principiis* 1.2.2.

81   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 7.6.

indistinct *Logos* easily allows for the assertion that the Father and the Son are "one and the same."[82] This fact is especially clear when Tertullian taunts his opponents to change the wording of the Psalm so that they have a passage that supports their position: "My heart hath disgorged *myself* as a good word."[83] Tertullian's opponents do not allow for any distinction between the one speaking and the thing being spoken; they are one and the same. Origen appears to be addressing a similar problem when he writes, "Let them declare to us that God the Word is such a word, having life in himself, and either is not separated from the Father and, in accordance with this position, does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) nor is he a son, or is both separated and invested with *ousia*."[84] For Origen, if the *Logos* is not separated (οὐ κεχωρισμένον) or distinct from the Father, he does not subsist (μὴ ὑφεστάναι) and, therefore, cannot be a son. Conversely, if the *Logos* is separate from the Father, he has *ousia* (οὐσιωμένον).[85] The problem is that in the monarchian exegesis, the προφοράν is merely syllables and is denied ὑπόστασιν or οὐσίαν; the Son does not have distinct existence alongside the Father.

Origen returns to this Psalm repeatedly in the first book of his commentary on the Gospel of John because it was an integral piece of the monarchian contention that the Word was, in fact, not an existent distinct from the Father. Furthermore, one of the reasons Origen downplays the significance of Word as a title for Christ in book one of *ComJn* is this prominent exegetical trend

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82   For the monarchian contention that the Father and Son are one and the same, see especially *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.10.11–12; Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3: *maxime haec quae se existimat meram veritatem possidere dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat* (CCSL 2:1161).

83   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.2 (italics mine). Note the subtle shift between the Latin text of the Psalm, *Eructavit cor meum sermonem optimum* and the modified version Tertullian puts on the lips of his opponents, *Eructavit me cor meum sermonem optimum*. (Latin from CCSL 2:1171).

84   Origen, *ComJn* 1.152 (trans. FC 80:64–65 with modifications): Καὶ λόγον τοιοῦτον καθ᾽ αὑτὸν ζῶντα καὶ ἤτοι οὐ κεχωρισμένον τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο τῷ μὴ ὑφεστάναι οὐδὲ υἱὸν τυγχάνοντα ἢ καὶ κεχωρισμένον καὶ οὐσιωμένον ἀπαγγελλέτωσαν ἡμῖν θεὸν λόγον. Greek from SC 120:136–138.

85   Origen gives us a rough summary of his opponents' interpretation of Psalm 44:2, but he does not elaborate on their teaching. From *Contra Noetum* and *Adversus Praxean*, however, we know that the monarchians denied that there was any distinction between the Father and the Son. Consider the saying Hippolytus attributes to the Noetians: "You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, 'The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!'" See *Contra Noetum* 3.2 (trans. Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, ed. Robert Butterworth, Heythrop Monographs 2 (London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977), 48.).

of his monarchian opponents.[86] Thus, Origen spends so much time discussing every title of Christ but *Logos* in his commentary on the opening verse of John's gospel, which is the *locus classicus* for *Logos* Christology. As is clear elsewhere, Origen was certainly not averse to developing a *Logos* Christology, but he deemphasized it in this instance to counter the monarchian usage of the term. Origen, of course, does not completely pass up this opportunity to speak about the Word. In book two of *ComJn*, he argues that all rational creatures are rational insofar as they participate in the *Logos*.[87] He is not willing to relinquish such an important Christological title to his opponents, but he can develop an alternative to combat what he views as their mistaken interpretation of *Logos*.

Where we would expect to find lengthy meditations on Christ as *Logos*, we see Origen suggest that Wisdom is perhaps the most proper name for the Son. When Origen does discuss the Son as *Logos* in book one of *ComJn*, he locates *Logos* in Wisdom. He states, "And if we should carefully consider all the concepts applied to him, he is the beginning only insofar as he is wisdom. He is not even the beginning insofar as he is the Word, since 'the Word' was 'in the beginning,' so that someone might say boldly that wisdom is older than all the concepts in the names of the firstborn of creation."[88]

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86   As I noted above in my summary of scholarship, the Valentinian usage of *Logos* surely contributed to Origen's de-emphasis of it as well. A few scholars have noticed the importance of Wisdom as a Christological title in Origen, but they do not consider the function of Wisdom as a response to monarchianism. See A.H.B. Logan, "Origen and Alexandrian Wisdom Christology," in *Origeniana Tertia: The Third International Colloquium for Origen Studies, University of Manchester, September 7th–11th, 1981*, ed. Richard Hanson and Henri Crouzel (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1985), 123–129; W. Ullmann, "Die Sophia-Lehre des Origenes im 1 Buch seines Johanneskommentars," *Studia Patristica* 16.2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1985), 271–278; Miyako Demura, "Origen on Sophia in Contra Celsum: The Double Understandings of the Wisdom of Solomon 7:27," in *Origeniana Quinta: Papers of the 5th International Origen Congress, Boston College, 14–18 August 1989* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 174–178; Michel Fédou, *La sagesse et le monde: Essai sur la christologie d'Origène*, Collection "Jésus et Jésus-Christ" 64 (Paris: Desclée, 1995). Behr writes that in books 1–2 of *ComJn*, Origen pays the most attention "to the designation of Jesus as the 'Word,' for, as mentioned earlier, Origen is particularly concerned about those who refrain from investigating 'the meaning of what is indicated by the term "Word,"' so that they do not have to affirm the independent subsistence of the Son (ComJn. 1.125, 151)." See Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 182. As I argue in what follows, despite the few passages where Origen complains of his opponents' misinterpretation of the title *Logos*, he downplays it in favor of the title *Sophia*.

87   See especially the section on participation starting in 2.16.

88   Origen, *ComJn* 1.118 (trans. FC 80:58): Καὶ ἐὰν ἐπιμελῶς ἐξετάζωμεν αὐτοῦ πάσας τὰς ἐπινοίας, μόνον κατὰ τὸ εἶναι σοφία ἀρχή ἐστιν, οὐδὲ κατὰ τὸ εἶναι λόγος ἀρχὴ τυγχάνων, εἴγε "ὁ λόγος ἐν ἀρχῇ" ἦν· ὡς εἰπεῖν ἄν τινα τεθαρρηκότος ⟨ὡς⟩ πρεσβύτερον πάντων τῶν ἐπινοουμένων ταῖς

Origen's de-emphasis of *Logos* is not confined to *ComJn*. In his discussion of Christ in *De Prin*. 1.2, Origen begins with a discussion of the names applied to Christ. Instead of *Logos*, Origen focuses on Christ as Wisdom.[89] He then quickly adds, "Let no one think, however, that when we give him the name 'wisdom of God' we mean anything without substance (*aliquid insubstantivum*)."[90] It appears that Origen made this comment to guard against the same problem he saw in the monarchian exegesis of Psalm 44:2 that he addressed in *ComJn*, namely, that they denied the Son substantiality and distinction from the Father. Origen discusses Christ as *Logos* in *De Prin*. only after he has considered him as Wisdom. Although Origen locates *Logos* within Wisdom in book 1 of *ComJn*, he viewed both Wisdom and *Logos* as proper titles for the Son, titles that would have been appropriate even if humans had not fallen.[91]

Tzamalikos is right to point out that for Origen, Wisdom and *Logos* always function in a complementary fashion. That is, Origen's focus on Wisdom in the opening books of *ComJn* in no way implies that it is in opposition to a use of *Logos* to describe the Son. These two terms are inseparable for Origen. As elsewhere, Origen accents one term or part of his theology as his particular context requires. Because he was dealing with what he viewed as an abberant *Logos* theology from the monarchians, he emphasiszed the complementary term, Wisdom, to describe the Son.[92]

In both *ComJn* and *De Prin*., Origen interprets ἀρχή in John 1:1 as a reference to the ἀρχή in Proverbs 8:22 ff., where Wisdom is said to have been with God before creation. By means of Pr. 8:22, which itself echoes the opening words of Genesis in the LXX, Origen explicitly links Wisdom with demiurgic functions, even claiming that Wisdom contains within herself all of the forms of what

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ὀνομασίαις τοῦ πρωτοτόκου πάσης κτίσεώς ἐστιν ἡ σοφία. Greek from SC 120:120. In the sections preceding this one, Origen discusses the role of Wisdom in creation. He also discusses the relationship between *Logos* and Wisdom, although his discussion is not terribly clear.

89   Origen, *De Prin*. 1.2.

90   Origen, *De Prin*. 1.2.2 (trans. Butterworth, 15 with modifications): "Nemo tamen putet aliquid nos insubstantiuum dicere, cum eum dei sapientiam nominamus." Latin from Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, vol. 1, Sources chrétiennes 252 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 112. Butterworth translates *aliquid insubstantivum* as "anything without hypostatic existence." This translation, however, takes too much liberty because we are not sure that *hypostasis* was in the original Greek.

91   Origen, *ComJn* 1.124. Origen's point here is that, in the absence of the fall, Christ would not have needed to be "physician" or "shepherd." In the absence of the fall, however, Christ would have still been Wisdom and Word.

92   See Panayiotis Tzamalikos, *Origen—Cosmology and Ontology of Time*, vol. 77, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae (Leiden: Brill, 2006).

would be created.[93] In *De Prin.*, he asks if any pious person could consider the Father to have ever existed without Wisdom by his side.[94] Later in book one of *ComJn*, Origen stresses that the Wisdom of God "is above all creation" (τὴν ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν κτίσιν σοφίαν τοῦ θεοῦ).[95] Thus, not only has Origen argued that Wisdom is not something insubstantial, he has also argued that Wisdom has been alongside, and distinct from, the Father from the beginning—that the Father has never been without Wisdom.[96]

At the beginning of book two, Origen addresses views that are surely monarchian. He writes,

> Many people who wish to be pious are troubled because they are afraid that they may proclaim two Gods (δύο ἀναγορεῦσαι θεοὺς) and, for this reason, they fall into false and impious beliefs. They either deny that the individual nature (ἰδιότητα) of the Son is other than that of the Father by confessing him to be God whom they refer to as 'Son' in name at least, or they deny the divinity of the Son and make his individual nature (ἰδιότητα) and essence as an individual (τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφήν) to be different from the Father.[97]

In this passage, he uses two terms, ἰδιότης and περιγραφή, to describe the individuality of the Son.[98] Without overtly directing it at monarchians, Origen had

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93   Origen, *ComJn* 1.111 ff.; *De Prin.* 1.2.3.

94   Origen, *De Prin.* 1.2.2.

95   Origen, *ComJn* 1.244–246 (Greek from SC 120:180).

96   Note that Tertullian does something very similar to this in his reading of Proverbs 8:22 in *Adversus Praxean* 6. There, he speaks of Wisdom being "established as a second person (*secundam personam*)." For both Tertullian and Origen, the description of Wisdom as being with God in creation provides ample grounds to assert that there was another (person, being, thing?) with God at creation. As I noted above, however, Origen probably disagreed with the fact that Tertullian thought that the Word only achieved a perfect nativity when God spoke the first words in creation. The way Origen speaks of Wisdom as alongside the Father *prior* to creation serves as a good refutation of Tertullian's position that the Word only achieved perfect nativity when God spoke in creation.

97   Origen, *ComJn* 2.16 (trans. FC 80:98): Καὶ τὸ πολλοὺς φιλοθέους εἶναι εὐχομένους ταράσσον, εὐλαβουμένους δύο ἀναγορεῦσαι θεοὺς καὶ παρὰ τοῦτο περὶ πίπτοντας ψευδέσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι δόγμασιν, ἤτοι ἀρνουμένους ἰδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμολογοῦντας θεὸν εἶναι τὸν μέχρι ὀνόματος παρ' αὐτοῖς "υἱὸν" προσαγορευόμενον, ἢ ἀρνουμένους τὴν θεότητα τοῦ υἱοῦ τιθέντας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἰδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν τυγχάνουσαν ἑτέραν τοῦ πατρός. Greek from SC 120:220–222. I examine this passage at length in the next chapter.

98   For a good discussion of the use of περιγραφή by Origen and others, see Matthew R. Crawford, "The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14:10–11," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21,

earlier used περιγραφή to speak about the individuality of the Son.[99] He begins, "In addition, to signify that the Word has his own individuality, that is to say, lives according to himself ...."[100] He goes on and writes about the "*Logos* ... having ὑπόστασιν 'in the beginning,' in Wisdom."[101] Even when Origen is focusing on the title *Logos*, he employs Wisdom as the basis for articulating the distinct ὑπόστασις or ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν of the Son.

I have argued that Origen's turn to Wisdom Christology as a means of establishing the individual identity of the Son was due to his rejection of monarchianism in Rome. The monarchians identified the Father and the Son, and their Stoicized understanding of the *Logos* helped support this identification.[102] Their understanding of the *Logos* as a *prophora* from the Father allowed them to deny that the *Logos* had any individual existence of his own. He was merely struck air or sound. This understanding of *Logos* meant that the monarchians did not have to consider the *Logos* as *another* existing alongside the Father.

Accordingly, Origen de-emphasized *Logos* Christology and developed Wisdom Christology in counterpoint to his monarchian opponents. The turn to Wisdom Christology shaped his Christology in two important ways. First, Origen de-emphasized *Logos* as the pre-eminent title of Christ in response to the controversy that the monarchian interpretation of the term had caused. Second, he emphasized Wisdom in his understanding of the Son to counteract the monarchian position: he argued that the Son, as Wisdom, had an individual existence distinct from the Father from the beginning.[103] He then described the *Logos* as in the beginning (ἐν ἀρχῇ), which he identifies with Wisdom, thus communicating to the *Logos* the distinct individual existence he had ascribed to Wisdom. His use of Wisdom Christology was also able to counteract what he most likely viewed as a problem in non-Stoicized *Logos* theologies of someone like Tertullian. Tertullian argued that the *Logos* received "perfect nativity" when God spoke the first words in creation; but for Origen, such an understanding of the *Logos* coming to fully or perfectly exist at a point in time was problematic. He used the concept of Wisdom to argue that the Son preceded creation and

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no. 4 (2013): 549–555. Note also that this term shows up in a number of places where Clement of Alexandria discusses the relationship of the Father and Son.

99   Origen, *ComJn* 1.291–292.

100   Origen, *ComJn* 1.291 (trans. FC 80:94): Καὶ ἔτι εἰς τὸ παραδέξασθαι τὸν λόγον ἰδίαν περιγραφὴν ἔχοντα, οἷον τυγχάνοντα ζῆν καθ' ἑαυτόν. Greek from SC 120:206.

101   Origen, *ComJn* 1.292: λόγος ... ἐν ἀρχῇ, τῇ σοφίᾳ, τὴν ὑπόστασιν ἔχων. Greek from SC 120:206.

102   Again, see specifically *ComJn* 151–152 for Origen's discussion of the reading of Psalm 44:2 that denies *ousia* to the *Logos*.

103   As I have noted above, Origen uses a number of different terms to establish this distinct individual existence: ὑπόστασις, οὐσία, περιγραφή, and ἰδιότης, to name a few.

indeed was always alongside the Father.[104] In this way, his Wisdom Christology accomplished something that a de-Stoicized *Logos* theology might not have been able to.

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104 See especially, *De prin.* 1.2.2. See also passages like *ComJn* 10.246, where Origen argues that for a father to be father, he must always have a son. As John Behr astutely notes, Origen was on the early end of those who held that the relationship between the Father and Son is constitutive of the core of their being, and therefore, must always have existed. See Behr, *The Way to Nicaea*, 185.

Origen the Subordinationist: Subordination as a Means of Distinguishing the Father and Son

1   Introduction: Anti-monarchian Subordination in the Early Third Century

In the first part of this book, I offered a plausible theory for the rise of monarchianism and gave a reconstruction of the major theological claims of the monarchians. At the beginning of the third century, the monarchians claimed that the Father and Son were "one and the same."[1] With this claim, they denied that there was any distinction between the Father and Son. For the anti-monarchian writers who opposed them, finding proper means to distinguish the Father and Son was of paramount importance. Like earlier authors, they used the language of alterity and claimed that the Son was "other" (*alius* or ἕτερος) than the Father.[2] Following the tradition of authors who antedated the monarchian controversy, like Athenagoras, they also spoke of distinction by using the language of order or τάξις.[3] They used various other terms such as περιγραφή, ἰδιότης, ὑπόστασις, οὐσία, and ὑποκείμενον to describe how the Father and Son had existences differentiated from each other. At the beginning of the third century, however, these terms did not yet have fixed, univocal meanings. The anti-monarchian writers used these terms and others to argue for the distinction of the Father and the Son, but they had to offer further explanation to clarify how they were using them.

In this chapter, I demonstrate that the intentional subordination of the Son was a common strategy that anti-monarchian writers used to distinguish the Father and Son during the first half of the third century. By situating their terms for distinction within a subordinationist framework, they were able to

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1   See Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3 and *Refutatio* 9.10.11–12 for prime examples of this claim. Tertullian writes: *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat.* The *Refutatio* records the following language: οὕτως γοῦν δοκεῖ μοναρχίαν συνιστᾶν, ἓν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσκων ὑπάρχειν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν.

2   For examples, see Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 11.4; Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 11.1, among others.

3   See especially Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3–4, where Tertullian uses *gradus* in a manner similar to Athenagoras' use of τάξις.

clarify how the Father and Son were not "one and the same." The term subordination is often used by scholars with the negative evaluative judgment that whatever is deemed subordinationist was a failure to live up to the standards of Nicaea.[4] I reject this usage as anachronistic when discussing third-century texts and authors and argue, to the contrary, that the subordinationist schemata employed by the authors considered in this chapter were intentionally used to distinguish the Father and Son.[5] Although subordinationism comes to be viewed as heretical in the post-Nicene period, it was an accepted anti-monarchian strategy among some prominent early third-century authors. Simply put, what is less than cannot be the same as.

By treating subordination in the context of anti-monarchian polemics, I hope to avoid anachronistic evaluative judgments. Thus, I examine three instances of anti-monarchian subordination in the early third century. First, I examine subordinationist passages from Tertullian and Novatian, whose works were separated by roughly thirty years.[6] Next, I evaluate a key passage from the beginning of book 2 of Origen's *Commentary on John*, which was composed in the years between *Adversus Praxean* and *De Trinitate*. In order to justify my focus on this passage, I preface it with an appraisal of the value of Rufinus' translations of Origen's work.[7] Finally, I conclude that subordinationist renderings of the Son's relationship to the Father were a key feature in anti-monarchian polemics and that Origen's subordinationist scheme in *ComJn* 2.13–32 is best understood within this context.[8]

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4   Simonetti notes that scholars often view the subordinationism of a pre-Nicene theologian as something of an embarrassment. He then notes that it is only an embarrassment if we expect the pre-Nicene theologians to have espoused post-Nicene orthodoxy *avant la lettre*. Manlio Simonetti, "Note sulla teologia trinitaria di Origene," *Vetera Christianorum* 8 (1971): 274. It is precisely this sort of embarrassment that drives Christoph Bruns' preoccupation with determining whether Origen's subordinationism was ontological, in his *Trinität und Kosmos: zur Gotteslehre des Origenes*, Adamantiana 3 (Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2013).

5   Geoffrey D. Dunn rightly notes the importance of reading texts within their contemporary contexts, although he has not completely escaped the post-Nicene freight attached to pronouncements of subordinationism. He writes, "The need to read Novatian free from later developments in trinitarian theology is important and for this reason Novatian's work deserves a re-reading. A good historical theologian seeks not to evaluate early theological writings from a later perspective or to use them to prove points in other debates, but to understand them as products of their own environment and to understand them within that environment" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 78, no. 4 (2002): 389–390).

6   For the dating of these texts, see my discussions in the earlier chapters.

7   Specifically, I discuss why I have chosen to privilege *ComJn* over *De Principiis*, which appears to provide a more compact and orderly account of Origen's Trinitarian theology.

8   Adolf von Harnack rightly observes, "While Adoptianism apparently played a very small part

2   Tertullian

Scholars have puzzled over what to make of Tertullian's Trinitarian theology in *Adversus Praxean*. On the one hand, he responds to the monarchian accusations that he separates the Father from the Son by arguing that the Father, Son, and Spirit all share one substance.[9] On the other hand, some passages in the work strike scholars as undeniably "subordinationist." Eric Osborn has captured the scholarly ambivalence toward Tertullian's trinitarian theology well: "Criticism of Tertullian's doctrine of the trinity has measured him against later formulations and either applauded or bewailed his achievement. To many he seems to have anticipated Nicaea and later developments, to others he has succumbed to extreme subordinationism."[10] Raniero Cantalamessa judges certain aspects of Tertullian's theology to be subordinationist, writing, "The Christ of Tertullian is God in the same way as the Father, but not to the same extent."[11] Similarly, Adhémar d'Alès concludes that in Tertullian's theology, "The divinity of the Father is communicated by degrees to the Son and the Holy Spirit, without detriment to the monarchy."[12] His final judgment is that "the subordinationist flavor of some of the passages is undeniable."[13]

In Tertullian's Trinitarian vocabulary in *Adversus Praxean*, there are some words that he consistently uses to denote unity and some that he uses consistently to denote distinction. The following passage, where Tertullain focuses on monarchianism among other heresies, gives a clear example of these terms:

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in the development of the Logos Christology in the church, the Christological theses of Tertullian and the rest were completely dependent on the opposition to the Modalists. This reveals itself especially in the strict subordination of the Son to the Father. It was only by such a subordination that it was possible to repel the charge, made by opponents, of teaching that there were two Gods" (*History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 3 [Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907], 70).

9   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3–4.

10   Eric Osborn, *Tertullian, First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133. He then qualifies this scenario on the same page, "A first reading of *Against Praxeas* suggests that Tertullian has not avoided a division of the divine substance, and more exact scrutiny indicates that he may not have given the son and the spirit a totality of divine substance."

11   Raniero Cantalamessa, *La cristologia di Tertulliano*, Paradosis 18 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Edizioni universitarie Friburgo, 1962), 27: *Il Cristo di Tertulliano è Dio allo stesso modo del Padre, ma non nella stessa misura.*

12   Adhémar d'Alès, *La théologie de Tertullien*, Bibliothèque de théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1905), 73.

13   Ibid., 101.

and in particular this one [Monarchainism] which supposes itself to possess truth unadulterated while it thinks it impossible to believe in one God unless it says that both Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one and the same: as though the one ⟨God⟩ were not all ⟨these things⟩ in this way also that they are all of the one, namely by unity of substance, while none the less is guarded the mystery of that economy which disposes the unity into trinity, setting forth Father and Son and Spirit as three, three however not in quality but in sequence, not in substance but in aspect, not in power but in ⟨its⟩ manifestation, yet of one substance and one quality and one power, seeing it is one God from whom those sequences and aspects and manifestations are reckoned out in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. How they admit of plurality without division the discussion will show as it proceeds.[14]

In this passage, Tertullian uses *substantia, status*, and *postestas* to indicate of what there is one among Father, Son, and Spirit.[15] He distinguishes these latter three by using the terms *gradus, forma*, and *species*.[16] Of note here is *gradus*, which implies a gradation of the three Trinitarian persons.[17] In his discussion of *gradus* in Tertullian, Rankin writes, "Here we have the suggestion of a hierarchy in the Godhead, which Tertullian is prepared to accept with the attendant risk of suggesting a notion of subordinationism, for he will do every-

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14   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 2.3–4 (trans. Evans, 132; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1161). *maxime haec quae se existimat meram ueritatem possidere, dum unicum Deum non alias putat credendum quam si ipsum eundemque et Patrem et Filium et Spiritum dicat. Quasi non sic quoque unus sit omnia dum ex uno omnia per substantiae scilicet unitatem et nihilominus custodiatur oikonomiae sacramentum, quae unitatem in trinitatem disponit, tres dirigens Patrem et Filium et Spiritum, tres autem non statu sed gradu, nec substantia sed forma, nec potestate sed specie, unius autem substantiae et unius status et unius potestatis quia unus Deus ex quo et gradus isti et formae et species in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti deputantur. ⟨Qui⟩ quomodo numerum sine diuisione patiuntur, procedentes tractatus demonstrabunt.*

15   Moingt highlights that Tertullian uses *substantia* as a unifying term in *Adversus Praxean*, but he cautions against reading too much into Tertullian's usage. He suggests that in *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian means something like generic unity when he speaks of unity of substance, not something like numerical unity of substance. He further notes that we should not expect Tertullian to have anticpated the philosophical difficulty introduced by Arius. See Joseph Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, vol. 2, Théologie 69 (Paris: Aubier, 1966), 395.

16   *Species* is not as important for my argument as *gradus*, but note Moingt's lengthy discussion of Tertullian's use of the *species*: ibid., 2:433–447.

17   For a detailed discussion of *substantia, status*, and *gradus* in Tertullian, see René Braun, *Deus Christianorum: recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, 2nd ed., Collec-

thing he possible [*sic*] can to avoid the greater dangers of modalism."[18] Elsewhere, Tertullian speaks of an order within the Godhead without the use of *gradus*:

> how should God be thought, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit occupying second and third place, while they are to such a degree conjoint of the Father's substance, to experience a division and a dispersion such as he does not experience in the plurality of those angels, alien as they are from the Father's substance?[19]

This sentence again highlights how Tertullian can at the same time claim unity of substance for the Trinitarian persons and distinction by order or place, a distinction that neither divides nor disperses them. The assignment of second or third place to the Son and Spirit does not necessarily imply subordination, but other instances where Tertullian uses a *taxis* to distinguish the Trinitarian persons lead to the conclusion that the Son and Spirit are somehow less than the Father. Just before the quotation above, Tertullain describes the Son's place

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tion des études augustiniennes 70 (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1977), 176–207. Note also Moingt's detailed discussion of *gradus*: Moingt, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 2:447–478. Moingt notes that from the perspective of God's interaction with the world, Tertullian's use of *gradus* can seem to imply that the Son is posterior and inferior to the Father. Moingt, however, wants to avoid these conclusions (463). These very notions that Moingt finds uncomfortable, however, are precisely the ones that help Tertullian distinguish the Father and Son.

18 David Rankin, "Tertullian's Vocabulary of the Divine 'Individuals' in Adversus Praxean," *Sacris Erudiri* 40 (2001): 20. Later, Rankin writes, "In employing *gradus* to distinguish the Persons Tertullian comes perilously close—indeed some might suggest that he cannot avoid it—to a form of subordinationism. Yet, used in conjunction with terms such as *conserti* and *connexus*, and understood against the backdrop of the *oikonomia*, Tertullian is prepared to take this risk in order to expose and oppose the greater danger of Praxeas' modalism" (45). Rankin's analysis here exemplifies the typical scholarly attitude toward pre-Nicene subordinationism. For Rankin, subordinationism is something to be avoided almost at all costs; it is perilous and risky. Tertullian, however, does not appear to share this modern aversion to subordinationist understandings of the Son's relationship to the Father. Even as he describes it as perilous, Rankin can recognize that it was commonplace in pre-Nicene theology: "Subordination is, however, not an unusual feature of Tertullian's concept of the Trinity, as it was not for anyone prior to Nicaea" (43). Rankin overstates his case, for the monarchians had no *other* to subordinate to the Father.

19 Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.5 (trans. Evans, 133; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1162): *Quale est ut Deus diuisionem et dispersionem pati uideatur in Filio et in Spiritu sancto, secundum et tertium sortitis locum, tam consortibus substantiae Patris quas non patitur in tot angelorum numero et quidem tam ⟨alienorum⟩ a substatia Patris?*

in the monarchy by invoking the language of participation. He writes of the Monarchy, "it is not *ipso facto* divided, does not cease to be a monarchy, if the son also is assumed as partner [*particeps*] in it, but it continues to belong in first instance to him by whom it is passed on to the son: and so long as it is his, that continues to be a monarchy which is jointly held by two who are so closely united."[20]

Tertullian's understanding of the unity of God and monarchy is further elucidated by his description of what would destroy monarchy:

> Overthrow of monarchy you should understand as ⟨taking place⟩ when there is superimposed another kingship of its own character and its own quality, and consequently hostile, when another god is introduced to oppose the Creator, as with Marcion, or many gods according to people like Valentinus and Prodicus: then is it for the overthrow of the monarchy when it is for the destruction of the creator.[21]

This passage demonstrates how Tertullian understands the economy to work. There is but one monarch who administers the economy through those who share in his rule.[22] A monarchy can, by definition, only have one monarch; and the Marcionite dualism destroys this arrangement. In the systems of both Marcion and Valentinus, other deities are often opposed to the rule of the supreme deity. Tertullian's monarchical economy has the Father at the top with the Son and Spirit in the second and third places, respectively. Both the Son and the

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20   *Adversus Praxean* 3.3 (trans. Evans, 133): *si vero et filius fuerit ei cuius monarchia sit, non statim dividi eam et monarchiam esse desinere si particeps eius adsumatur et filius, sed proinde illius esse principaliter a quo communicatur in filium, et dum illius est proinde monarchiam esse quae a duobus tam unitis continetur.* Joseph Moingt argues that Tertullian's use of a schema of participation does not imply subordination, that the divine power is not degraded. See Joseph Moingt, "Le problème du Dieu unique chez Tertullien," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 44, no. 4 (1970): 355–356. See also idem, *Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 2:395. As I argue in the following discussion of Origen's use of participation, however, the subordinationist implications of the framework of participation are difficult to escape—especially within the philosophical milieu of Middle Platonism.

21   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.6 (trans. Evans, 133; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1162): *Euersio enim monarchiae illa est tibi intellegenda cum alia dominatio suae condicionis et proprii status ac per hoc aemula superducitur, cum alius deus infertur aduersus creatorem cum Marcione, cum plures, secundum Valentinos et Prodicos: tunc in monarchiae euersionem cum in creatoris destructionem.*

22   Note again, that in *Adversus Praxean* 3.3, quoted on the previous page, Tertullian describes the Son's place in the monarchy by using the language of participation.

Spirit work in accord with the will of the Father, thus working from within the monarchy instead of opposing it.

Tertullian next argues for the distinction of the Father and the Son in a discussion of the visibility of the Son.[23] He writes,

> It will follow that we must understand the Father as invisible because of the fulness of his majesty, but must acknowledge the Son as visible because of the enumeration of his derivation (*modulo deriuationis*), just as we may not look upon the sun in respect of the total of its substance which is in the sky, though we can with our eyes bear its beam because of the moderation of the assignment which from thence reaches out to the earth.[24]

Here, Tertullian claims that the Son is visible because his majesty is derivative. The Father possesses properly the fullness of majesty, while the Son has majesty in virtue of the *modulus* of its derivation from the Father.[25] The fact that the Son derivately has what is properly the Father's allows for Tertullian to distinguish between them. The degree to which each possesses majesty determines whether that person is visible. Tertullian here uses the sun/ray image that is important elsewhere in *Adversus Praxean* for maintaining both the unity and distinction of Father and Son.[26] The key point for Tertullian is that the Father possesses something (in this case, majesty) in its fullness, and the Son only possesses it in part. Were the Son the same as the Father, he too would have the fullness of majesty.

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23   Recall from the earlier chapters on monarchianism that the question of God's visibility was one of the chief areas of disagreement between the monarchians and their opponents. The monarchians argued that the same God was both visible and invisible, while their opponents consistently argued that the Father was invisible and that the Son was visible.

24   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 14.3 (trans. Evans, 149; Latin CCSL 2.2, 1176): *consequens erit ut inuisibilem patrem intellegamus pro plenitudine maiestatis, visibilem vero filium agnoscamus pro modulo deriuationis, sicut nec solem nobis contemplari licet, quantum ad ipsam substantiae summam quae est in caelis, radium autem eius toleramus oculis pro temperatura portionis quae in terram inde porrigitur*.

25   Evan's translation here is idiosyncratic, and he blunts the force of what Tertullian says. "Enumeration" is not a standard definition for *modulus*, which normally means something like a "measure" or "small measure." Tertullian is intentionally contrasting *modulus* with *plenitudo*. The Father's majesty cannot be measured; and thus, he is invisible. Because of the derivation of the Son's majesty and subsequent lack of plenitude, the Son is visible.

26   For his other uses of the sun/ray image in this work, see *Adversus Praxean* 8.5–7, 13.10, 18.4, 22.6, 27.1.

In *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian's insistence that the Son is not the same as the Father because the Son is less than the Father is most clearly stated in chapter nine, where he combats the monarchian identification of the Father and Son:

> Remember at every point that I have professed this rule, by which I testify that Father and Son and Spirit are unseparated from one another, and in that case you will recognise what I say and in what sense I say it. For look now, I say that the Father is one, and the Son another, and the Spirit another (every unlearned or self-willed person takes this statement in bad part, as though it proclaimed diversity and because of diversity threatened a separation of Father and Son and Spirit: but I am bound to make it, so long as they maintain that Father and Son and Spirit are identical, favouring the monarchy at the expense of the economy), not however that the Son is other than the Father by diversity, but by distribution, not by division but by distinction, because the Father is not identical with the Son, they even being by measure one and another. For the Father is the whole substance, while the Son is an outflow and portion of the whole, as he himself professes, *Because my Father is greater than I*: and by him, it is sung in the psalm, he has also been made less, *a little on this side of the angels*. So also the Father is other than the Son as being greater than the Son, as he who begets is other than he who is begotten, as he who sends is other than he who is sent, as he who makes is other than he through whom a thing is made. It suits my case also that when our Lord used this word regarding the person of the Paraclete, he signified not division but ordinance: for he says, *I will pray the Father and he will send you another advocate, the Spirit of truth.* Thus ⟨he calls⟩ the Paraclete other than himself, as we say the Son is other than the Father, so as to display the third sequence in the Paraclete as we the second in the Son, and so to preserve the economy. Is not the very fact that they are spoken of as Father and Son ⟨a statement that they are⟩ one thing beside another? Surely all facts will correspond with their designations, and diversity of designation can by no means be confused, since neither can ⟨the diversity⟩ of the things of which they are the designations. *"Is" is "is", and "not" is "not": for what is more than this is on the side of evil.*[27]

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27   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1–4 (trans. Evans, 140–141 with my modifications; Latin, CCSL 2.2, 1168–1169): *Hanc me regulam professum qua inseparatos ab alterutro patrem et filium et spiritum testor, tene ubique et ita quid quomodo dicatur agnosces. Ecce enim dico alium esse Patrem et alium Filium et alium Spiritum—male accepit idiotes quisque aut per-*

This passage encapsulates many of the key features of Tertullian's polemic against the monarchians. His first task is to reiterate that he does not teach that the Father, Son, and Spirit are separated, divided, or diverse, lest he be accused of the error of the Valentinians.[28] Such clarification, however, does not cause him to abandon the language of alterity to describe the Father, Son, and Spirit: *Ecce enim dico alium esse Patrem et alium Filium et alium Spiritum* ....[29] This language, of course, harkens back to that used by Justin in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Such assertions of the alterity of Father, Son, and Spirit would have undoubtedly been repugnant to the monarchians; it might have been this sort of language that provoked the monarchians in the first place. Tertullian is well aware of the harsh ring of the language of alterity, and he quickly moves to rule out certain ways of interpreting his use of *alius*. The three divine persons are other *non tamen diuersitate alium Filium a Patre sed distributione, nec diuisione alium sed distinction* ....[30]

Thus far in the passage, Tertullian has tried to secure the distinction of the persons of the Trinity, but he has not yet used anything potentially subordinationist to accomplish this goal. His next bevy of reasons that the Father and Son are not one and the same, however, relies on his assumption that there is gra-

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versus hoc dictum, quasi diuersitatem sonet et ex diuersitate separationem protendat Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti. Necessitate autem hoc dico cum eundem Patrem et Filium et Spiritum contendunt, aduersus oikonomiam monarchiae adulantes—non tamen diuersitate alium Filium a Patre sed distributione, nec diuisione alium sed distinctione, quia non sit idem Pater et Filius, uel modulo alias ab alio. Pater enim tota substantia est, Filius uero, deriuatio totius et portio sicut ipse profitetur: Quia Pater maior me est. *A quo et minoratus canitur in psalmo:* Modico quid citra angelos. *Sic et Pater alias a Filio, dum Filio maior, dum alias qui generat, alius qui generatur, dum alius qui mittit, alius qui mittitur, dum alius qui facit, alius per quem fit. Bene quod et Dominus usus hoc uerbo in persona Paracleti non diuisionem significauit sed dispositionem:* Rogabo *enim, inquit,* Patrem et alium advocatum mittet uobis, Spiritum ueritatis. *Sic alium a se Paracletum, quomodo et nos a Patre alium Filium, ut tertium gradum ostenderet in Paracleto, sicut nos secundum in Filio, propter oikonomiae obseruationem. Ipsum, quod Pater et Filius dicuntur, nonne aliud ab alio est? Utique enim omnia quod uocantur, hoc erunt, et quod erunt, hoc uocabuntur, et permiscere se diuersitas uocabulorum non potest omnino, quia nec rerum quarum erunt uocabula.* Est, est, non, non; nam quod amplius est, hoc a malo est.

28   This dual polemical context of monarchianism and Valentinianism suggests that monarchianism was at least in part a reaction against Gnosticism. Tertullian is likely guarding against these Gnostic views because the monarchians accused him of teaching the separation of the Father and the Son in the manner of some Gnostics. Note also Moingt's discussion of how Valentinian theology might have shaped Tertullian's use of *substantia* (*Théologie trinitaire de Tertullien*, 2:394).

29   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1.

30   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.1.

dation within the Godhead. He writes, "For the Father is the whole substance, while the Son is an outflow and portion of the whole" (*Pater enim tota substantia est Filius uero, deriuatio totius et portio*).[31] Ernest Evans writes concerning this passage,

> The unity depends on this, that the Father is the whole substance, *pater tota substatia est*, while the Son is *derivatio totius et portio* (§ 9). It is tempting here, and in § 26 (*portio totius quae cessura erat in filii nomen*) to claim that *portio* does not mean part but inheritance, and that *totius* is a descriptive, not a partitive, genitive; but it seems from Novatian ... that in the third century *portio* was regularly used for *pars*, and in fact in the present passage Tertullian admits a certain minoration of the Son (not only in the incarnation but) in his divine being.[32]

Evans later tries to downplay the implications of this passage, arguing, "And it would appear likely that while the suggestion of minoration was forced upon him by controversy, the safeguarding of equality was a requirement of the received tradition."[33] Andrew McGowan likewise notes that this passage is potentially subordinationist but then seeks to soften the severity of that judgment. He writes, "The 'Father is the whole substance' (*pater enim tota substantia est*, 9.2), which suggests a quite different understanding of God's fatherhood, and potentially a subordinationist one; but this is primarily a claim for unity of divine substance."[34]

Evans is concerned to protect Tertullian from what he views to be the damning charge of subordinationism, but his statement begs the question about

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31   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.2. Kevin B. McCruden notes that such notions of the Father containing the fullness of the divinity imply that the Logos is a lesser divinity than the Father. See his "Monarchy and Economy in Tertullian's Adversus Praxeam," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55, no. 3 (2002): 327.

32   Tertullian, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas*, ed. Ernest Evans (London: S.P.C.K., 1948), 44.

33   Ibid., 247.

34   Andrew Brian McGowan, "God in Early Latin Theology: Tertullian and the Trinity," in *Andrew Brian McGowan, Brian Daley, and Timothy J. Gaden, eds., God in Early Christian Thought: Essays in Memory of Lloyd G. Patterson, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 94* (*Leiden: Brill, 2009*), 66. It is not clear that recourse to "unity of divine substance" successfully mitigates the charge of subordinationism. Substance and status unify the divine persons for Tertullian; but his point is that they can be possessed in differing, and, therefore, differentiating, degrees. It is not clear that emphasizing "unity of substance" is Tertullian's primary goal here. Indeed, he needs to emphazie both unity and distinction equally in order to achieve his double goal here.

whether or not the equality of the Father and Son was yet a part of the "received tradition."[35] Tertullian here uses straightforwardly subordinationist language as an intentional means of distinguishing the Father and the Son. He clearly argues, without blinking, that the Son cannot be the Father because the Father is greater than the Son. One cannot be greater than oneself.

Tertullian then bolsters his argument with the exegesis of John 14:28 and Psalm 8:5/Hebrews 2:7.[36] He quotes John 14:28 as scriptural warrant for his assertion that the Father is greater than the Son (*Sic et Pater alias a Filio, dum Filio maior*).[37] Evans observes that Tertullian cites Psalm 8/Hebrews 2 elsewhere to refer to the incarnation. He then states, "The present passage therefore stands alone in regarding the minoration as the subordination of the Son to the Father within the Godhead."[38] *Adversus Praxean* 9.1–4 is a clear and focused example of Tertullian using subordinationist imagery and exegesis as a means of distinguishing the Father, Son, and Spirit. The intentional subordination of the Son to the Father was one of Tertullian's anti-monarchian means of distinguishing the Father and Son.

3   Novatian

Questions about the nature of Novatian's subordinationism have arrested the attention of scholars for some time. Daniel Lloyd recently offered a valuable summary of scholarly positions regarding Novatian's subordinationism sug-

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35   Furthermore, Evans does not define what he means by "received tradition." Evans seems to assume that the equality of the Father and Son was generally accepted at the beginning of the third century and that it was Tertullian's duty to protect this tradition. As I hope to have demonstrated in the preceding reconstruction of the monarchian controversy, however, few theologians were yet concerned with the equality of the Father and Son at the beginning of the third century. More pressing for them was the question of whether the Father and Son were "one and the same." Only after that question was answered would debates about their equality come into focus.

36   Tertullian's quotation of Psalm 8:5/Hebrews 2:7 presents a variant reading not attested in any of the main text-types of the *Vetus Latina*. See Hermann Josef Frede, ed., *Epistulae ad Thessalonicenses, Timotheum, Titum, Philemonem, Hebraeos*, Vetus Latina 25 (Freiburg/ Breisgau: Herder, 1975), 1127–1131.

37   Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 9.2.

38   Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 248. Evans wants to protect Tertullian from his later critics, but his statement needs much more nuance. As I have argued above, there are numerous passages within *Adversus Praxean* that imply that the Son is somehow less than the Father.

gesting three main groupings of scholarship: 1) those who view Novatian's subordination of the Son as ontological; 2) those who view Novatian as teaching a subordination of rank or authority, but, nevertheless, holding that he taught that the Father and Son were equal in divinity; and 3) those who believe "that Novatian never resolves the theological tension between his suggestions of equality and inequality."[39] In the first group, d'Alès had no doubt that Novatian's subordinationism was ontological.[40] James Leonard Papandrea's work is the most prominent in the second group, although his attempts to rescue Novatian often feel strained.[41] DeSimone's scholarship represents those who felt that Novatian had significant unresolved theological tension.[42]

Russel J. DeSimone writes that "[Novatian] strives to place in bold relief the posteriority of the Son, insofar as his origin is concerned, so that he can better defend the personal distinction of the Father and the Son. He has been charged with subordinationism. Novatian, however, did not make use of explicit formulas to formally defend subordinationism."[43] DeSimone argues that "Novatian, however, in his efforts to posit a real distinction in the Trinity against the Sabellians, ran ashore on the dangerous shoals of subordinationism (mitigated form)."[44] DeSimone correctly perceives that Novatian's subordinationism was a response against his monarchian, or Sabellian, opponents.[45] He, nevertheless,

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39   Daniel Lloyd, "Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome's Theology of the Son" (Ph.D. dissertation, Marquette University, 2012), 9–13.

40   See especially, his, *Novatien, étude sur la théologie romaine au milieu du IIIe siècle*, Études de théologie historique (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924), 120–134.

41   See his two major works: *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome: A Study in Third-Century Orthodoxy* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 2008); *Novatian of Rome and the Culmination of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 175 (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick, 2012).

42   See his *The Treatise of Novatian, the Roman Presbyter on the Trinity. A Study of the Text and the Doctrine*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 4 (Roma: Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, 1970); idem, "Introduction," in *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish Foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters*, The Fathers of the Church 67 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 13–19; idem, "Again the Kenosis of Phil. 2,6–11," *Augustinianum* 32, no. 1 (1992): 91–104.

43   DeSimone, "Introduction," 19. Earlier (p. 17), DeSimone argued that Novatian's subordinationism is a product of his reliance on the theology of Tertullian. As the above discussion indicated, I think Tertullian's subordination pervades more of his thought than just his conception of the procession of the Word.

44   DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 90–91.

45   Geoffrey Dunn also notes that "Novatian was writing in reaction against those who overemphasised the oneness of God." See his "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," 386. See also his specific mention of monarchianism at p. 390.

exhibits the attitude prevalent among modern scholars that subordinationism was a danger that would have best been escaped by pre-Nicene theologians.[46] DeSimone ultimately judges Novatian's subordinationism to be the product of some sort of theological incompetence, although Lloyd has heavily critiqued him on this point.[47]

Geoffrey Dunn has more recently suggested that appraisals of Novatian's theology as ontological subordination perhaps expect too much from him. Referring to J.N.D. Kelly's classic, *Early Christian Doctrines*, Dunn writes,

> Kelly argues that the only way Novatian maintained a belief in the one-ness of God and a distinction of persons in the Trinity was through a subordination of Son to Father. As we have noted above, there is certainly a subordination of dignity or function between Son and Father, but one should be a little hesitant to conclude from this that Novatian envisaged a subordination of natures or being; he simply seemed to have avoided anything that esoteric.[48]

Such a judgment that Novatian avoided anything as "esoteric" as speaking about the subordination of being or nature betrays some assumptions about Novatian that Lloyd sought to correct. Dunn rightly notes that Novatian "was commenting on and explaining the rule of truth (*regula veritatis*) as preserved

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46   Thus, he writes that Novatian "did not avoid the pitfall of subordinationism" (DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 78). At p. 169, he uses similar language: "He has avoided the dreaded pit of ditheism only to fall headlong into that of subordinationism."

47   Consider the following statement at ibid., 181: "Hence, Novatian's deviations are due to doctrinal impotence rather than obstinate, heretical intent. Although it is evident from critical scrutiny that many of Novatian's statements are truly tainted with subordination-ism, he did not make use of explicit formulas to formally defend subordinationism. Finally, we must bear in mind that the subordinationism of certain Ante-Nicene writers was sim-ply an erroneous theory of private theologians and does not touch the faith of the Church." Contra DeSimone, I argue that subordinationism was one of the most prominent means some early third-century theologians used to distinguish the Father from the Son against monarchianism.

48   "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," 400. Dunn here has the fol-lowing statement from Kelly in his sights: "Thus, for all his emphatic assertion of the Son's distinct subsistence as a Person, he succeeds in avoiding the ditheism he dreads only by strongly subordinating Him to the Father, or alternatively by making Him a passing moment in the divine life of the Father. His doctrine of the Holy Spirit is, for his date, rudimentary" (J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5th, rev. ed. [London: A & C Black, 1977], 126).

in the early Roman church's baptismal symbol of faith."[49] Dunn's observation comes with the concomitant judgment that "it could well be a work designed more for catechetical instruction than for theological investigation."[50] This judgment about *De Trinitate* implies that it is perhaps simplistic and unconcerned with esoteric things such as being or nature.[51] Lloyd, however, has argued precisely the opposite. He demonstrates that in this treatise, Novatian employs the technical language of Middle Platonism to buttress his theology.[52]

I find Lloyd's arguments about ontological subordination in *De Trinitate* compelling, but my primary interest in Novatian here is not whether his subordination of the Son is ontological. My interest is in the purpose of Novatian's subordination of the Son. The following passages from *De Trinitate* that clearly depict subordination will aid in determining the function of Novatian's subordination. Commenting on John 16:14, Novatian writes,

> If [the Paraclete] received from Christ the things which He will make known, then surely Christ is greater than the Paraclete, since the Paraclete would not receive from Christ unless He were less than Christ. Now, the fact that the Paraclete is less than Christ proves that Christ is also God, from whom he received what He makes known. This, then, is a great testimony to Christ's divinity, inasmuch as the Paraclete, having been found to be less than Christ, takes from Him what He gives to others. If Christ

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49   Dunn, "The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," 390.
50   Ibid.
51   Note Lloyd's similar reading of Dunn at Lloyd, "Ontological Subordination," 14. Dunn's implication that Novatian was philosophically unsophisticated is continued in his image of Novatian as unable to keep from running aground in his attempt to articulate his theology: "Sailing between the Scylla and Charybdis of Adoptionism and Modalism, Novatian could not avoid the perils of subordinationism, although they seem to be perils about which he was largely unaware and which would only be recognised in the following generations" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," 409). Dunn's statement here demonstrates the unnuanced way in which many scholars speak of subordinationism. On the one hand, Dunn refers to subordinationism as a peril. On the other hand, Dunn suggests that Novatian would not have been aware that it was perilous because it was only recognized as such by later generations. But subordinationism can only be viewed as perilous when it is viewed through the lens of later theological developments. For early third-century anti-monarchian authors, it was a tool to be employed intentionally to secure the distinction of Father and Son against the monarchians, as I hope to show in this chapter.
52   See especially his first two chapters on Novatian's conception of the Father in relation to contemporary philosophical theology: Lloyd, "Ontological Subordination," 22–74.

were only man, Christ would receive from the Paraclete what He should
say; the Paraclete would not receive from Christ what he should make
known.[53]

The subordination of the Paraclete to Christ is the main focus of this passage,
and Novatian highlights this subordination in order to reiterate the divinity of
Christ. For Novatian, the subordination of the Paraclete to the Son is not an
accident he could have avoided if he had been more careful or astute. It is a
strategy he employs in order to make an intentional theological claim about the
divinity of the Son. Novatian here is dealing with the views of psilanthropists,
but the logic he employs to establish the Son's divinity recurs in his treatment
of positions that are explicitly monarchian.

In a passage commenting on Philippians 2:6–11, Novatian again demon-
strates subordinationist tendencies.[54] He writes,

> Therefore, though 'He was in the form of God, He did not think it robbery
> to be equal to God.' For though He was ever mindful that He was God
> of God the Father, He never compared or ranked Himself with God the

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[53]   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16.3 (trans. FC 67:62; Latin CCSL 4:40): *Sed si a christo accepit quae*
       nuntiet, maior ergo iam paracleto christus est, quoniam nec paracletus a christo acciperet,
       nisi minor christo esset. Minor autem christo paracletus christum etiam deum esse hoc ipso
       probat, a quo accepit quae nuntiat, ut testimonium christi diuinitatis grande sit, dum minor
       christo paracletus repertus ab illo sumit quae ceteris tradit. Quandoquidem si homo tantum-
       modo christus, a paracleto christus acciperet quae diceret, non a christo paracletus acciperet
       quae nuntiaret. Dunn notes regarding this passage, "Such an economic treatment of the
       Spirit still leaves Novatian open to charges of subordinationism, particularly in the light
       of his comment in chapter 16 about the relationship between Son and Spirit that: '…
       maior ergo iam paracleto Christus est, quoniam nec paracletus a Christo acciperet, nisi minor
       Christo esset'" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," 402–403).

[54]   Novatian's interpretation of Philippians 2:6–11 features prominently in DeSimone's work.
       Although DeSimone had earlier judged Novatian's interpretation of this passage to be sub-
       ordinationist, he later changed his position in his 1992 article. For his earlier position, see
       The Treatise of Novatian, 108–113. In his later article, he writes, "Novatian's teaching, there-
       fore, is not 'frankly heretical', as Prat thought, nor is it a question of a diminished, inferior
       god of the Neoplatonics, nor the heretical crass subordinationism of the Arians. It is the
       elaboration of Ante-Nicene Trinitarian language" ("Again the Kenosis of Phil. 2,6–11," 100).
       Note also Lloyd's discussion at "Ontological Subordination," 281–284. Papandrea claims
       that Phil. 2:6–11 is the "most important New Testament passage for Novatian …." He then
       claims that "*forma* can be synonymous with *substantia* for Novatian, so that to say that
       Christ was in *forma dei*, is tantamount to asserting that He is consubstantial (ὁμοούσιος)
       with the Father" (*The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome*, 268–269). To make such a
       judgment, Papandrea has to ignore a mass of contrary evidence.

Father, knowing that He is of His Father; and this very thing (that He is) He had, because the Father had given it to Him. Hence not only before He took upon Himself the flesh but even after He had taken a body, and again, after His Resurrection, He rendered and still renders perfect obedience to His Father in all things. Consequently, this proves that He never regarded His divinity as a means of unlawfully arrogating to Himself equality with God the Father.[55]

Novatian first argues that Christ was God because he was *ex deo patre*. He then qualifies this statement by clarifying that the Son did not compare himself to the Father. Novatian's reasoning for this point is illuminating. The Son does not compare himself to the Father because the Father has given to the Son what the Son has. Although Papandrea claims that Novatian's interpretation of this passage is "tantamount to asserting that [the Son] is consubstantial (ὁμοού-σιος) with the Father," a reading of this passage in light of Novatian's earlier remarks about the Paraclete suggests a more nuanced assessment is needed.[56] Recall that Novatian had earlier argued that the Paraclete is inferior to the Son because it receives from the Son.[57] Novatian's reasoning in the earlier passage yields a clear conclusion when applied to his exegesis of Philippians 2:6–11. If reception of something makes the recipient inferior to the giver, the Son must be inferior to the Father because he receives from the Father. This line of thinking elucidates Novatian's conclusion that "this proves that He never regarded

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55   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 22.5–6 (trans. FC 67:82; Latin CCSL 4:55). *Hic ergo quamuis esset in forma dei, non est rapinam arbitratus aequalem se deo esse. Quamuis enim se ex deo patre deum esse meminisset, numquam se deo patri aut comparauit aut contulit, memor se esse ex suo patre et hoc ipsum, quod est, habere se, quia pater dedisset. Inde denique et ante carnis assumptionem, sed et post assumptionem corporis, post ipsam praeterea resurrectionem omnem patri in omnibus rebus oboedientiam praestitit pariter ac praestat. Ex quo probatur numquam arbitratum illum esse rapinam quandam diuinitatem, ut aequaret se patri deo.* DeSimone's earlier position views chapter 22 as one of the most egregious examples of Novatian's subordinationism: "The note of subordinationism in Novatian, however, is not found so much in his exegesis of the theophanies (chs. 17, 18, 19, 20)—where he follows the safe and sure tradition of previous Ante-Nicene writers—as in his unique and unprecedented exegesis of Philippians 2:6–11, contained in chapter 22 of his treatise. The distinctive mark of subordinationism is clearly and apodictically found there." See DeSimone, *The Treatise of Novatian*, 108.

56   Again, see Papandrea, *The Trinitarian Theology of Novatian of Rome*, 269. The introduction of ὁμοούσιος brings with it the connotations of its legacy in the Nicene and post-Nicene debates, where it was used to emphasize the equality of the Father and Son. Whatever Novatian thinks about shared substance between the Father and Son, it is clear that he is stressing their inequality here.

57   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 16.3.

His divinity as a means of unlawfully arrogating to Himself equality with God the Father."[58] Contra Papandrea, the Son can possess divinity from the Father without being equal to the Father in divinity.

In his interpretation of Philippians 2:6–11, Novatian stresses that the Son has always been obedient to the Father. This obedience to the Father is partially a result of the fact that the Son is inferior to the Father. A statement later in *De Trinitate* makes it clear that the Son's obedience to the Father had polemical utility for Novatian. He argues, "What could make it more evident that He is not the Father but the Son than the fact that He is set before us as obedient to God the Father? If we were to believe otherwise—that he is the Father— then we would have to say that Christ is subject to another God the Father."[59] Immediately preceding this sentence, Novatian focuses on the power that the Son has over all things. Recalling the subordinationist framework of reception discussed above, Novatian speaks of the Son's power as delivered and granted to the Son by the Father.[60] The Son's obedience to and reception of power from the Father shows that he is not himself the Father. Novatian expounds the Son's obedience to the Father within his subordinationist framework of reception and deploys it to argue against the monarchian contention that the Father and the Son are the same, that the Father is the Son and the Son is the Father. Here, obedience and subordination secure the distinction between the Father and the Son.[61]

Novatian continues to multiply reasons that the Son is inferior to the Father. He writes,

> On the other hand, the Father also precedes Him; for as the Father, He must of necessity be prior, because He who knows no origin must of necessity precede Him who has an origin. At the same time the Son must be less than (*minor*) the Father, for he knows that He is in the Father, having an origin, since he is born.[62]

58 Novatian, *De Trinitate* 22.6 (trans. FC 67:82).

59 Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.21 (trans. FC 67:92; Latin CCSL 4:63): *Quid enim tam euidens potest esse, hunc non patrem esse, sed filium, quam quod oboediens patri deo proponitur, ne si pater esse credatur, alteri iam deo patri christus subiectus esse dicatur?*

60 Novatian, *De Trinitate* 26.20: "... *potestatem, sed qua traditam, sed qua concessam, sed qua a Patre proprio sibi indultam.*"

61 Manlio Simonetti also observes that Novatian's subordination of the Son serves to distinguish him from the Father ("Il problema dell'unità di Dio a Roma da Clemente a Dionigi," *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 22, no. 3 [1986]: 462).

62 Novatian, *De Trinitate* 31.3 (trans. FC 67:108; Latin CCSL 4:75): *quia et pater illum etiam praecedit, quod necesse est prior sit qua pater sit, quoniam antecedat necesse est eum qui habet*

Scholars have focused on this passage in their discussions of whether Novatian taught the eternal generation of the Son, but those questions are beyond the scope of my argument here.[63] What is important for my argument is that we have here another clear example of Novatian's contention that the Son is less than the Father. Note that in this passage, Novatian claims that the Son is inferior to the Father because he comes from the Father. This lines up with his argument about Phil. 2 in *De Trinitate* 22.5–6

Having surveyed some of the passages where Novatian implies or overtly claims that the Son is less than the Father, let us now consider the function of Novatian's subordinationism.[64] In chapter 27 of *De Trinitate*, Novatian engages with monarchian interpretations of John 10:30, first using a grammatical argument to refute their reading of the verse.[65] After this argument, Novatian cites John 10:36, where Jesus asks, "Do you say of Him whom the Father has made holy and sent into this world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"[66] Novatian comments:

> Furthermore, He declares that He has been made holy by His Father. Since, then, He receives sanctification from the Father, He is less than the Father. Because He is less than the Father, He is consequently ⟨not the Father⟩, but the Son. For if He had been the Father, He would have given, not received sanctification. By openly acknowledging that He receives sanctification from the Father, He proves, by the very fact that He receives sanctification from the Father, that He is less than the Father; consequently He has already demonstrated that He is the Son, not the Father.[67]

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originem ille qui originem nescit, simul ut hic minor sit, dum in illo esse se scit, habens originem quia nascitur.

63   See Lloyd's discussion of this passage and its interpretation at "Ontological Subordination," 262–270.

64   Of particular note for establishing his subordinationism are *De Trinitate* 22.5–6, 26.20–21, and 30.3. The subordinationist import of these passages is especially clear when they are read through the lens of Novatian's comments about the Holy Spirit in *De Trinitate* 16.3.

65   On this argument, see Mark DelCogliano, "The Interpretation of John 10:30 in the Third Century: Antimonarchian Polemics and the Rise of Grammatical Reading Techniques," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 6, no. 1 (2012): 117–138.

66   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.10 (trans. FC 67:94).

67   Novatian, *De Trinitate* 27.12 (trans. FC 67:94; Latin CCSL 4:65): *Et sanctificatum se a suo Patre esse proponit. Dum ergo accipit sanctificationem a patre, minor patre est; minor autem patre consequenter ⟨non pater⟩ est, sed filius. Pater enim si fuisset, sanctificationem dedisset, non accepisset. Et nunc autem profitendo se accepisse sanctificationem a patre, hoc ipso quo patre se minorem accipiendo ab ipso sanctificationem probat, filium se esse, non patrem, monstrauit.*

This passage demonstrates the polemical function of subordination within Novatian's thought. Note again that Novatian argues that the Son's reception (here, of sanctification) from the Father makes him less than the Father. The next step in his reading of the passage is crucial for my argument. Because the Son is less than the Father, he is not the Father but the Son. For Novatian, the subordination of the Son to the Father is neither an accidental by-product of an anti-psilanthropist proof of Christ's divnity nor the product of an inferior theological mind. It is purposefully deployed to refute the monarchian identification of the Father and Son.[68] As for Tertullian, the subordination of the Son to the Father was a crucial piece in Novatian's anti-monarchian polemic.

4   Subordination and Distinction: Origen's Schema of Participation

In this final section, I analyze a core passage from the second book of Origen's *Commentary on John.* In this passage, Origen seeks to guard against monarchian theology by employing a framework of participation which, I argue, is subordinationist. I supplement my analysis with other passages from Origen's corpus, but I do not attempt to be exhaustive. I consider the passage from *ComJn* 2.13–32 to be one of the most important passages for determining Origen's views on the relationship between the Father and Son in his Alexandrian works.[69] Before examining this passage, however, I must make a few observations about Rufinus as a translator of Origen.

4.1   *Two Origens: Rufinus' Translation of* De Principiis
In my examination of Origen's articulation of the distinction between the Father and Son in his Alexandrian works, I use his statements in *De principiis* only with great caution. Such a methodological decision, however, is not fol-

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68   Commenting on *De Trinitate* 22.2–3, Dunn writes, "That there is the suggestion of subordinationism here is undeniable, but it was more by accident or oversight than by design. Establishing the divinity of Christ was Novatian's concern, and questions of the relationship between Father and Son beyond establishing that the Son was of God were more of a distraction" ("The Diversity and Unity of God in Novatian's De Trinitate," 398). Novatian's comments in *De Trinitate* 27.12 and elsewhere make problematic Dunn's claim that Novatian's subordinationism in his interpretation of Philippians 2:6–11 was an accident or the result of oversight. In the earlier passage, Novatian uses the same logic that he employs in 27.12. The Son, as receiver, is less than the Father, who gives to the Son.

69   Henri Crouzel notes that this passage has caused a good bit of controversy, but then he tries to explain away its obvious implications. See his *Origen*, trans. A.S. Worrall (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 181.

lowed in several recent reconstructions of Origen's Trinitarian theology. The recent works of Christopher Beeley and Illaria Ramelli are good examples of this trend. Christopher Beeley's recent discussion of Origen's Christology notes the importance of Origen's *ComJn* for a reconstruction of his authentic thought, but Beeley relies heavily on statements from *De principiis* without serious discussion of the reliability of Rufinus' translation.[70]

In her recent article alleging anti-subordinationism in Origen, Ilaria Ramelli notes that she offers a "painstaking analysis of [Origen's] works (always with attention to their reliability in relation to Greek original, translations, and fragments)."[71] After this statement of methodology, Ramelli starts her article with a series of quotations from Latin translations of Origen, notably *De principiis* and the *Commentary on Romans*. Regarding *Comm. in Rom.* 7.12.146–147 (7.11.10 in SC 543), she notes that the text claims that "Christ has nothing and nobody over him, not even the Father."[72] The translators of the *Sources chrétiennes* edition note the following about the passage Ramelli quoted: "On peut légitimement penser que cette dernière formule porte la marque de Rufin, soucieux de défendre l'orthodoxie d'Origène. Mais le développement qui précède n'en traduit pas moins la pensée de l'Alexandrin, et montre que celui-ci ne peut être accusé d'avoir ouvert la voie à l'arianisme."[73] Ramelli has introduced the quotation from Rufinus' translation as authoritatively representing Origen's thought; but in her article, she does not interact with those scholars who suggest that it is clearly a Rufinian modification or interpolation.

Furthermore, Ramelli's decision to label Origen an "anti-subordinationist" begs a fundamental question that she does not answer: Was anyone being accused of subordinationism in the early third century? As my argument should make clear, my answer is a resounding "no." The subordination of the Son to the Father was a tool used intentionally by Tertullian, Novatian, and Origen against the monarchians. None of these authors was yet labeled a subordi-

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70 See: Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 9–11, 21–27. The closest Beeley comes to engaging the question of the reliability of Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* is in n. 41 on pp. 319–320. Here, defending Rufinus' translation, he argues that Jerome's critique of Rufinus' translation "clearly reflects Jerome's own biases and tells us little about Origen's text." Beeley considers Rufinus' translations to represent accurately Origen's thought on Trinitarian matters.

71 Ilaria Ramelli, "Origen's Anti-Subordinationism and Its Heritage in the Nicene and Cappadocian Line," *Vigiliae Christianae* 65, no. 1 (2011): 21.

72 Ibid., 25.

73 Origen, *Commentaire sur l'Épître aux Romains*, ed. Caroline P. Hammond Bammel, trans. Luc Brésard and Michel Fédou, Sources chrétiennes 543 (Paris: Cerf, 2011), 369, n. 2.

nationist because such theologies had not yet taken on the negative evaluative judgment they were later given in the post-Nicene era. This, of course, is not to say that the theologies of Tertullian, Novatian, and Origen were unopposed in the third century. As I make clear, the monarchians opposed their theology; but they opposed it because they thought it was tantamount ditheism, not because it subordinated the Son to the Father. In the third century, the subordination of the Son to the Father was a common anti-monarchian strategy that was rejected by the monarchians as entailing ditheism. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that Tertullian, Novatian, and Origen do not defend themselves against charges of subordinationism, only against charges of ditheism or polytheism.

My hesitance about the use of *De principiis* as a source for Origen's Trinitarian theology stems from my conviction that Rufinus' translations are fundamentally unreliable with regard to Origen's Trinitarian theology. Numerous other scholars have also noted this same unreliability.[74] The following survey of Rufinus' translation methodology demonstrates why his translations of Trinitarian material are of dubious value.[75] After this discussion of his methodology,

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[74]   Paul Koetschau notes that "Rufinus has adapted Origen's doctrine of the Trinity to his orthodox commitments either by omission or emendation." See Koetschau, ed., *Origenes Werke: Fünfter Band; De Principiis* (ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ), GCS 22 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1913), cxxx. Basil Studer discusses Trinitarian issues in the translation of *De principiis* at length in his "Zur Frage der dogmatischen Terminologie in der lateinischen Uebersetzung von Origenes' De Principiis," in *Épektasis: Mélanges patristiques offerts au cardinal Jean Daniélou*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and Charles Kannengiesser (Paris: Beauchesne, 1972), 403–414. Regarding Rufinus' translations, Ronald E. Heine notes that "one may say that, on the whole, the substance can be regarded as representing Origen's thought. The major exception to this statement is theological statements regarding the Trinity and the resurrection of the body. Whenever statements on these subjects agree with the doctrines of the fourth-century Church they should be regarded with suspicion." See his "Introduction," in *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, ed. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 71 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 38. Catherine M. Chin specifically discusses Origen's subordinationism with regard to Rufinus' translation practices. See her "Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives: Translation as Origenism," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 18, no. 4 (2010): 628–634.

[75]   Charles Kannengiesser warns that we must not spend so much time worrying about Rufinus' translations that we fail to grasp the thought of Origen himself in his "Écriture et théologie trinitaire d'Origène," in *Origeniana sexta: Origéne et la Bible*, ed. Gilles Dorival and Alain Le Boulluec, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 118 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Peeters, 1995), 352: "Évitons que les arbres de Rufin traducteur ne nous cachent la forêt d'Origène auteur." Kannengiesser, of course, has a point; but so too do those who question the reliability of Rufinus' translations. Perhaps the best way to ensure that we do not lose sight of Origen's thought is to consider the texts that

I will offer a concrete example of how his methodological assumptions affect his translation practice.

Rufinus' working assumptions for translating Origen are first expressed in his translation of Pamphilius' *Apology for Origen* and his addendum of *On the Falsification of the Books of Origen* (henceforth *De adulteratione*). He explicitly discusses his methodological principles in *De adulteratione*, so it is the logical place to begin this discussion.[76] Rufinus begins by noting that there are in Origen's works things that do not agree with the rule of truth (*ueritatis regula*). There are also contradictions in Origen's writings, but Rufinus is confident that both sorts of problems cannot be the product of someone as wise and well-educated as Origen.[77] Such contradictory and problematic statements are found in Origen's writings, argues Rufinus, because "heretics" modified them and inserted their own heretical opinions, as is their wont.[78] Rufinus claims that such insertions were made in Origen's work, even in his own lifetime; and then Rufinus reproduces one of Origen's letters, wherein Origen himself complains of the falsification of his works.[79] Rufinus finally reaches the following conclusion:

> If anything is found in his works that is not consonant with the Catholic faith, we suspect that it has been inserted by heretics, and regard it as alien both to his understanding and to our faith. Even if we are deceived about this, we incur, as I think, no danger from such an error. For we ourselves, through God's help, continue unharmed by avoiding that which we regard as suspect and of which we disapprove.[80]

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survive in Greek as foundational and, only after a thorough examination of those texts, move on to a consideration of Rufinus' translations.

76   Rufinus' work on Pamphilius' *Apology*, *De adulteratione*, and *De Principiis* was completed from 397 to 398 at the request of a certain Macarius, whom Rufinus mentions in his preface to the translation of Pamphilius' *Apology*. For the dating of these works and the circumstances of their production, see Francis X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia (345–411): His Life and Works*, Studies in Medieval History 6 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 82–110; C.P. Bammel, "Last Ten Years of Rufinus' Life and the Date of His Move South from Aquileia," *Journal of Theological Studies* 28, no. 2 (1977): 386.

77   Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 1.

78   Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 2. Rufinus cites a number of examples of such misfortunes happening to the works of other authors, including Clement of Rome, Dionysius of Alexandria, Cyprian, Hilary of Poitiers.

79   Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 6–7.

80   Rufinus, *De adulteratione* 16 (trans. Thomas P. Scheck, *Apology for Origen*, The Fathers of the Church 120 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 136–137): *Si quid autem inuentum fuerit in his quod cum fide catholica non consonant, hoc et ab haereti-*

Rufinus' conclusions about the presence of heretical interpolations in Origen's writings motivate his approach to translating those same texts.[81]

Because Rufinus assumes that Origen's works contain interpolations, he does not hesitate to correct anything he deems to be contradictory or unorthodox at the time of his translation at the end of the fourth century. In the preface to his translation of *De Prin.*, he speaks of following the practices of a previous translator of Origen, presumably Jerome:[82]

> [I]n my translation I would follow as far as possible the rule observed by my predecessors and especially by the distinguished man whom I mentioned above. For he, when translating into Latin more than seventy treatises of Origen, called homilies, and also a number of his other Commentaries on St. Paul's epistles, both of which are known to contain in the original a good many statements likely to cause offence, so smoothed over and emended these in his translation, that a Latin reader would find in them nothing out of harmony with our faith. His example, therefore, I am following to the best of my ability; if not with an equal degree of eloquence, at least observing the same rules and taking care not to reproduce such passages from the books of Origen as are found to be inconsistent with and contrary to his true teaching.[83]

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cis suspicamur insertum et tam ab illius sensu quam a nostra fide ducimus alienum. In quo etiam si fallimur, nihil, ut opinor, periculi huiuscemodi errore incurrimus. Nam et ipsi Deo iuuante permanemus inlaesi uitando ea quae suspecta habemus et inprobamus. Latin from Pamphilus, Eusebius, and Rufinus, *Pamphile et Eusèbe de Césarée Apologie pour Origène; suivi de Rufin d'Aquilée Sur la falsification des livres d'Origène*, ed. René Amacker and Eric Junod, Sources chrétiennes 464 (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 320–322.

81   Catherine Chin helpfully catalogues some of Rufinus' basic assumptions about the texts he is working with: "first, the instability of texts given the mechanics of late ancient book production; second, the presumption of authorial consistency, so that the same author cannot be both orthodox and heretical; and third, the more general notion that textual corruption necessarily occurs over time, and that it is the task of later readers to restore a text to its original condition" ("Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives," 636–637).

82   Above, Rufinus speaks of this person translating some of Origen's Homilies on the Song of Songs, and the editors of the SC edition of *De prin.* identify this translator as Jerome. See Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, vol. 1, Sources chrétiennes 252 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 69.

83   Rufinus, *Preface to De principiis* 2 (trans. Origen, *On First Principles: Being Koetschau's Text of the De Principiis*, ed. Paul Koetschau, trans. G.W. Butterworth (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), lxii–lxiii.). *ut quantam fieri potest in interpretando sequar regulam praecessorum et eius praecipue uiri, cuius superius fecimus mentionem. Qui cum ultra septuaginta libellos Origenis, quos homileticos appellauit, aliquantos etiam de tomis in apostolum scriptis transtulisset in latinum, in quibus cum aliquanta offendicula inueniantur in graeco, ita*

As Rufinus' discussion makes clear, Origen's "true teaching" will emerge as something that will be in accord with what Rufinus takes to be the correct faith of his Latin readers, especially regarding Trinitarian theology. He goes on to make a specific remark about his treatment of Trinitarian passages:

> Wherever, therefore, I have found in his books anything contrary to the reverent statements made by him about the Trinity in other places, I have either omitted it as a corrupt and interpolated passage, or reproduced it in a form that agrees with the doctrine which I have often found him affirming elsewhere …. But I have said nothing of my own, simply giving back to him his own statements found in other places.[84]

Rufinus himself admits that he is especially cognizant of problematic passages regarding Trinitarian theology in Origen's corpus.

Rufinus states that he will correct Origen's Trinitarian thought so that it is in accord with what Origen says elsewhere. Although one might suspect that Rufinus is dissimulating when he claims only to be reproducing Origen's true thought, he is not necessarily being disingenuous. Shortly after his translation of the *Apology* and *De principiis*, Rufinus translated the *Dialogue of Adamantius on the Orthodox Faith*.[85] Although Buchheit claimed that Rufinus was aware

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      elimauit omnia interpretando atque purgauit, ut nihil illis quod a fide nostra discrepet latinus lector inueniat. Hunc ergo etiam nos, licet non eloquentiae uiribus, disciplinae tamen regulis in quantum possumus sequimur, obseruantes scilicet ne ea, quae in libris Origenis a se ipso discrepantia inueniuntur atque contraria, proferamus. Latin from SC 252:70.

84   Rufinus, *Preface to De Principiis* 3 (trans. Butterworth, lxiii.). *Sicubi ergo nos in libris eius aliquid contra id inuenimus, quod ab ipso in ceteris locis pie de trinitate fuerat definitum, uelet adulteratum hoc et alienum aut praetermisimus aut secundum eam regulam protulimus, quam ab ipso frequenter inuenimus adfirmatam …. Nihil tamen nostrum diximus, sed licet in aliis locis dicta, sua tamen sibi reddidiums.* Latin from SC 252:72. At the end of this passage, Rufinus wishes to diminish his role as a translator. He claims that he is not saying anything of his own; he is merely reproducing an undefiled Origen for his Latin readers. Note that shortly before this passage, Rufinus offers a thinly veiled critique of Pope Damasus' translation of Origen for introducing too much of his own voice: "I can see, however, that he derives most pleasure from the works of his own pen. He pursues a task that promises greater fame, that of being a 'father of the word' and not a mere translator" (*Sed ille, ut uideo, in stilo proprio placens rem maioris gloriae sequitur, ut pater uerbi sit potius quam interpres*). Rufinus, *Preface to De Principiis*, 1 (trans. Butterworth, lxii; Latin from SC 252:68). Catherine Chin notes that Rufinus privileged the role of translator more than that of author in his attempt to produce a Latin Christian library ("Rufinus of Aquileia and Alexandrian Afterlives").

85   The critical edition of this text can be found in Adamantius, *Der Dialog des Adamantius:*

that the work was not actually by Origen, Bammel argues that such a cynical interpretation is not necessary.[86] The author of the *Dialogue* spends the bulk of the work refuting the ideas of Marcionites and various schools of Gnosticism. The majority of the discussion revolves around the question of the problem of evil and its implications for monotheism, which was a focal point for Marcionite theology. These same issues were live questions at the time when Origen wrote.

Whether or not Rufinus was aware that it was not an authentic work of Origen, Murphy suggests that "Rufinus, on discovering the complete orthodoxy of the contents, naturally seized upon it as a justification of his contention that the errors found in the other works of Origen were interpolations."[87] Rufinus' belief that the *Dialogue* was genuinely a work of Origen allowed him to justify using it as the touchstone for his correction of the alleged interpolations in Origen's works; it gave him a more fully orthodox version of Origen from which to work.[88] Although the *Dialogue* is not explicitly a Trinitarian treatise, there are a few elements in it that would aid Rufinus in translating a more orthodox Origen into existence. In the first place, the author of the *Dialogue* writes, "I believe in One God, Creator and Maker of all things; and in God the Word, Who was born of Him, of the same Essence, and exists eternally."[89] The author's use of ὁμοούσιον here to describe the Word could easily have given Rufinus the license he needed to correct Origen's discussions of the Father/Son relationship, as he does is the passages discussed below.

ΠΕΡΙ ΤΗΣ ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΝ ΟΡΘΗΣ ΠΙΣΤΕΩΣ, ed. Willem Hendrik van de Sande Bakhuyzen, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 4 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1901). For an English translation, see Robert A. Pretty, ed. and trans., *Adamantius: Dialogue on the True Faith in God*, Gnostica 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997). Bammel places Rufinus' translation of this work ca. 398–399 ("Last Ten Years," 428). If Bammel's chronology is correct, it is unclear whether Rufinus had already had contact with the *Dialogue* when he was translating *De principiis*. Rufinus translated the *Dialogue with Adamantius* from Greek sources at the request of a certain "Paul", and Murphy suggests that Rufinus chose this work because he was already familiar with it (*Rufinus of Aquileia*, 123–125).

86   Bammel, "Last Ten Years," 390–391; V. Buchheit, "Rufinus von Aquileja als Fälscher des Adamantiosdialogs," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 51, no. 2 (1958): 314–328.

87   Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 125.

88   See Thomas P. Scheck's brief discussion of the Trinitarian orthodoxy of the *Dialogue*, in his Thomas P. Scheck, "Introduction," in *Apology for Origen*, The Fathers of the Church 120 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 16–17. Ἕνα θεὸν καὶ κτίστην καὶ δημιουργὸν τῶν ἁπάντων εἶναι πεπίστευκα καὶ τὸν ἐξ αὐτοῦ θεὸν λόγον ὁμοούσιον ...

89   Adamantius, *Dialogue* 804c (trans. Robert A. Pretty, ed., *Adamantius: Dialogue on the True Faith in God*, trans. Robert A. Pretty, Gnostica 1 (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 37.).

Further, in the passages discussed below, Rufinus' Origen draws a distinction between characteristics possessed essentially and accidentally. Such a distinction does not regularly occur in Origen's Greek works. It does, however, occur in the *Dialogue*. Thus, in lieu of any attestation to this distinction in Origen's corpus, Rufinus' translation of the *Dialogue* could be the source of his insertion of it into Origen's thought, as in the discussions of goodness below.

4.1.1 Test Case: *De Principiis* 1.2.13

In order to make more concrete observations about Rufinus' translations, I now examine his translation of *De principiis* 1.2.13, a passage for which we have both external attestation and internal parallels within Origen's other works. The choice of this passage is particularly apropos because of the ways it elucidates *ComJn* 2.13–32, which I will discuss after the present section. Rufinus' Latin translation reads as follows:

> There remains the inquiry, what is the 'image of his goodness'? Here, I think, we do well to adopt the same line of reasoning which we used above in regard to the image formed in a mirror. The original goodness is undoubtedly the Father; and from this is born the Son, who is in every respect an image of the Father, and who may also without any doubt be properly called an 'image of his goodness'. For there is no other second goodness existing in the Son, besides that which is in the Father. So the Saviour himself rightly says in the Gospel that 'none is good save one, God the Father', the purpose of this statement being to make it understood that the Son is not of some other 'goodness', but of that alone which is in the Father; whose image he is rightly called, because he neither springs from any other source than from original goodness itself,—for if that were so, there would seem to be a different goodness in the Son from that which is in the Father—nor has the goodness that is in him any dissimilarity or divergence from that of the Father. Accordingly we ought not to imagine that there is some kind of blasphemy, as it were, in saying that 'none is good save one, God the Father', as if these words were to be taken as a denial that either Christ or the Holy Spirit is good; but, as we said before, the original goodness must be believed to reside in God the Father, and from him both the Son and the Holy Spirit undoubtedly draw into themselves the nature of that goodness existing in the fount from which the one is born and the other proceeds. If then there are any other things called good in the scriptures, such as an angel, or a man, or a slave, or a treasure, or a good heart or a good tree, all these are so called by an inex-

act use of the word, since the goodness contained in them is accidental and not essential.[90]

Compare the above passage from Rufinus' Latin to the following Greek fragment from Justinian:[91]

In the same way, therefore, I consider that in the case of the Saviour it would be right to say that he is an image of God's goodness, but not goodness itself. And perhaps also the Son while being good, is yet not good purely and simply. And just as he is the image of the invisible God, and in virtue of this is himself God, and yet is not he of whom Christ himself says 'that they may know thee, the only true God'; so he is the image of the goodness, and yet not, as the Father is, good in a precisely similar way.[92]

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90   Origen, *De principiis* 1.2.13 (trans. Butterworth, 27–28). *Superest quid sit imago bonitatis eius inquirere, in quo eadem, ut opinor, intellegi conuenit, quae supererius de imagine ea, quae per speculum deformatur, expressimus. Principalis namque bonitas sine dubio pater est; ex qua filius natus, qui per omnia imago est patris, procul dubio etiam bonitatis eius conuenienter imago dicetur. Non enim alia aliqua secunda bonitas existit in filio praeter eam, quae est in patre. Vnde et recte ipse saluator in euangelio dicit quoniam nemo bonus nisi unus deus pater, quo scilicet per hoc intellegatur filius non esse alterius bonitatis, sed illius solius, quae in patre est; cuius recte imago appellatur quia neque aliunde est nisi ex ipsa principali bonitate, ne altera bonitas quam ea quae in patre est uideatur in filio, neque aliqua dissimilitudo aut distantia bonitatis in filio est. Propter quod non debet uelut blasphemiae aliquod genus putari in eo quod dictum est quia nemo bonus nisi unus deus pater, ut propterea putetur uel Christus uel spiritus sanctus negari quod bonus sit; sed, ut superius diximus, principalis bonitas in deo patre sentienda est, ex quo uel filius natus uel spiritus sanctus procedens sine dubio bonitatis eius naturam in se refert, quae est in eo fonte, de quo uel natus est filius uel procedit spiritus sanctus. Iam uero si qua alia bona in scripturis dicuntur, uel angelus uel homo uel seruus uel thesaurus uel cor bonum uel arbor bona, haec omnia abusiue dicuntur, accidentem, non substantialem in se continentia bonitatem.* Latin from SC 252:140–142.
91   As a general rule, Justinian's fragments should be viewed with suspicion because of his overt bias against Origen. In this case, as I discuss below, there are other texts from Origen's corpus that corroborate what Justinian records in the fragment.
92   Justinian, *Epistula ad Mennam* (trans. Butterworth, 27 with my modifications). Οὕτω τοίνυν ἡγοῦμαι καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος καλῶς ἂν λεχθήσεσθαι ὅτι εἰκὼν ἀγαθότητος θεοῦ ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ αὐτοαγαθόν. καὶ τάχα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ἀγαθός, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς ἁπλῶς ἀγαθός, καὶ ὥσπερ εἰκών ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου καὶ κατὰ τοῦτο θεός, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ περὶ οὗ λέγει αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς ἵνα γινώσκωσί σε τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν, οὕτως εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος, ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἀπαραλλάκτως ἀγαθός. Greek from Justinian, *Scritti teologici ed ecclesiastici di Giustiniano*, ed. Mario Amelotti and Livia Migliardi Zingale, Legum Iustiniani imperatoris vocabularium 3 (Milano: A. Giuffrè, 1977), 110. This text, with a few insignificant exceptions is the same as that printed by Koetschau in his edition of *De principiis*. See his *Origenes Werke: Fünfter Band; De Principiis (ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ)*, 47. Note also *ComJn*, 6.295 (trans. Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel*

Crouzel and Simonetti observe that the fragment from Justinian appears to be authentic, and the contents are not scandalous when viewed within the wider sweep of Origen's thought.[93] We also possess a comment from Jerome that appears to be discussing the same passage in *De principiis*. Jerome writes, "God the Father almighty he [Origen] calls good, and of perfect goodness. The Son is not good, but is a kind of breath and image of goodness, so that he is not called good absolutely, but with an addition, such as the good shepherd, etc."[94]

In addition to these exterior witnesses from Justinian and Jerome, we possess other passages from Origen where he speaks about the goodness of the Son in relation to the Father. In *ComJn* 13, Origen brings up the issue of the goodness of the Son, this time placing it in a fuller discussion of the relationship between the Father and Son:

> But we are obedient to the Savior who says, 'The Father who sent me is greater than I,' and who for this reason, did not permit himself to accept the title 'good' when it was offered to him, although it was perfectly legitimate and true. Instead, he graciously offered it up to the Father, and rebuked the one who wished to praise the Son excessively. This is why we say the Savior and the Holy Spirit transcend all created beings, not

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according to John, trans. Ronald E. Heine, Fathers of the Church 80 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989), 248. FC 80:248). "... for the Father is good, and the savior is an image of his goodness" (ὁ μὲν γὰρ πατὴρ ἀγαθός, ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ). Greek from Origen, *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, ed. Cécile Blanc, vol. 2: *Livres VI et X*, Sources chrétiennes 157 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 352.

93 Origen, *Traité des principes*, ed. Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, vol. 2, Sources chrétiennes 253 (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 54. "Le passage de Justinian peut être authentique et raccourci par Rufin pour être compris de ses lecteurs latins. Il n'est guère scandaleux si on le replace dans la conception d'Origène, car il traduit uniquement un subordinatianisme d'origine." Later they note that Justinian and Jerome warped Origen's thought by downplaying the unity of goodness between Father and Son (55). Görgemanns and Karpp also note that Rufinus seems to have suppressed some of the elements in Origen's thought, which they think are present in the Justinian fragment. See Origen, *Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, ed. Herwig Görgemanns and Heinrich Karpp, 2nd ed., Texte zur Forschung 24 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), 155, n. 43.

94 Jerome, *Epistula ad Avitum* 2 (trans. Butterworth, 27, n. 3). *deum patrem omnipotentem appellat bonum et perfectae bonitatis, filium non esse bonum sed auram quondam et imaginem bonitatis, ut non dicatur absolute bonus, sed cum additamento 'pastor bonus' et cetera.* Latin from Jerome, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, ed. Isidorus Hilberg, vol. 3 (epistulae CXXI–CLIV), Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum 56 (Vindobonae; Lipsiae: Tempsky; Freytag, 1918), 97.

by comparison, but by their exceeding preeminence. The Father exceeds the Savior as much (or even more) as the Savior himself and the Holy Spirit exceed the rest. And by 'the rest' I do not mean ordinary beings, for how great is the praise ascribed to him who transcends thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come? And in addition to these [what must we] say also of holy angels, spirits, and just souls? (152) But although the Savior transcends in his essence, rank, power, divinity (for the Word is living), and wisdom, beings that are so great and of such antiquity, nevertheless, he is not comparable with the Father in any way. (153) For he is an image of the goodness and brightness, not of God, but of God's glory and of his eternal light; and he is a vapor, not of the Father, but of his power; and he is a pure emanation of God's almighty glory, and an unspotted mirror of his activity.[95]

Compare this passage to a similar discussion in *ComMatt*, where Origen writes,

The Saviour is the image of the invisible God, and in the same way, he is the image of God's goodness. Whenever the word 'good' is applied to a lesser being, it has another meaning. Considered in relation to the Father, the Son is the image of the Father's goodness; considered in relation to other beings, he is to them what the Father's goodness is to him. And it can even be said that the analogy between God's goodness and the goodness of the Saviour, who is the image of God's goodness, is closer than the analogy between the Saviour and a good man, and good deed or a

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95   Origen, *ComJn* 13.151–153 (trans. FC 89:100). Ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς πειθόμενοι τῷ σωτῆρι λέγοντι· "Ὁ πατὴρ ὁ πέμψας με μείζων μού ἐστιν" καὶ διὰ τοῦτο μὴ ἐνεγκόντι μηδὲ τὴν "ἀγαθὸς" προση- γορίαν τὴν κυρίαν καὶ ἀληθῆ καὶ τελείαν παραδέξασθαι αὐτῷ προσφερομένην, ἀλλὰ ἀναφέροντι ⟨αὐ⟩τὴν εὐχαρίστως τῷ πατρὶ μετ' ἐπιτιμήσεως πρὸς τὸν βουλόμενον ὑπερδοξάζειν τὸν υἱόν, πάν- των μὲν τῶν γενητῶν ὑπερέχειν οὐ συγκρίσει ἀλλ' ὑπερβαλλούσῃ ὑπεροχῇ φαμὲν τὸν σωτῆρα καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, ὑπερεχόμενον τοσοῦτον ἢ καὶ πλέον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρός, ὅσῳ ὑπερέχει αὐτὸς καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα τῶν λοιπῶν, οὐ τῶν τυχόντων ὄντων. Ὅση γὰρ δοξολογία τοῦ ὑπερέχον- τος θρόνων, κυριοτήτων, ἀρχῶν, ἐξουσιῶν, καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, πρὸς τούτοις καὶ ἁγίων ἀγγέλων καὶ πνευμάτων καὶ ψυχῶν δικαίων, ⟨τί δεῖ⟩ καὶ λέγειν; (152.) Ἀλλ' ὅμως τῶν τοσούτων καὶ τηλικούτων ὑπερέχων οὐσίᾳ καὶ πρεσβείᾳ καὶ δυνάμει καὶ θειότητι—ἔμψυχος γάρ ἐστι λόγος—καὶ σοφίᾳ, οὐ συγκρίνεται κατ' οὐδὲν τῷ πατρί. (153.) Εἰκὼν γάρ ἐστι τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπαύγασμα οὐ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἀϊδίου φωτὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀτμὶς οὐ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλὰ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀπόρροια εἰλικρινὴς τῆς παντοκρατορικῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς ἐνερ- γείας αὐτοῦ. Greek from Origen, *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, ed. Cécile Blanc, vol. 3 (livres XIII), Sources chrétiennes 222 (Paris: Cerf, 1975), 112–114.

good tree. The fact that he is the image of God's goodness sets the Saviour higher above the lesser beings than the fact of being good sets God above the Saviour.[96]

Hermann Josef Vogt discusses both *ComJn* 13.151–153 and *ComMatt* 15.10 and concludes that these passages are not fundamentally at odds with later post-Nicene theology. He acknowledges that the passage from *ComJn* appears to be written in opposition to a Gnostic conception of *homoousios*, although he does not expand on this suggestion. He concludes that the passage in *ComJn* is not at odds with Nicaea because it is addressing the incarnate Son, not the pre-existent *Logos*. This, conclusion, however, is not clearly faithful to the text. Origen's hierarchical schema in which the Son is an intermediary seems to be fundamentally at odds with later Nicene doctrine.[97] Regarding the passage from *ComJn* 13, Jean Daniélou writes,

> Origen's position can be gathered from this without a shadow of a doubt. If the Son and the Spirit transcend all λογικοί, they are themselves transcended to a still greater extent by the Father. They thus form an intermediate category, which though much nearer to the Father than to the rest of creation, is still separate from him because their essence, power and other attributes are different from his.[98]

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96 Origen, *ComMatt* 15.10 (trans. Jean Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 255): Καὶ ὁ σωτὴρ δὲ ὡς ἔστιν "εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου", οὕτως καὶ "τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ εἰκών"· καὶ ⟨ἐπὶ⟩ παντὸς δὲ τοῦ ὑποδεεστέρου, ᾧ ἐφαρμόζεται ἡ "ἀγαθὸς" φωνή, ἄλλο σημαινόμενον ἔχει τὸ ἐφ' αὐτοῦ λεγόμενον, εἴπερ ὡς μὲν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα "εἰκών" ἐστιν "ἀγαθότητος", ὡς δὲ πρὸς τὰ λοιπὰ ὅπερ ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀγαθότης πρὸς αὐτόν. ἢ καὶ μᾶλλον ἔστι τινὰ ἀναλογίαν προσεχῆ ἰδεῖν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγαθότητος τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸν σωτῆρα ὄντα εἰκόνα "τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ", ἤπερ ἐπὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος πρὸς ἀγαθὸν ἄνθρωπον καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἔργον καὶ ἀγαθὸν δένδρον. πλείων γὰρ ἡ ὑπεροχὴ πρὸς τὰ ὑποδεέστερα ἀγαθὰ ἐν τῷ σωτῆρι, καθό ἐστιν "εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος" αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἤπερ ἡ ὑπεροχὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ὄντος ἀγαθοῦ πρὸς τὸν εἰπόντα σωτῆρα. Greek from Origen, *Origenes Werke: Origenes Matthäuserklärung*, ed. Erich Klostermann, vol. 10, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 40 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1935), 375–376. See also Crouzel's brief discussion of these two passages: Henri Crouzel, *Origène et Plotin: Comparaisons doctrinales*, Collection "Croire et savoir" 17 (Paris: Téqui, 1992), 130–131.

97 See Hermann Josef Vogt, *Origenes als Exeget*, ed. Wilhelm Geerlings (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999), 196–197.

98 Daniélou, *Origen*, 254–255. Daniélou's statement here seems to contradict itself and the text he is commenting on, but he is anticipating a tension in Origen's thought that he is about to introduce. Just following this quotation, he quotes *ComMatt* 15.10, where Origen states that the Son is closer to the Father in the hierarchy of beings than to other creatures.

Daniélou emphasizes one of the most prominent characteristics of Origen's theology: that of some sort of hierarchy of beings. This hierarchy is evident in the passages on goodness from *ComJn* and *ComMatt*. In each, the Son is placed lower in the hierarchy than the Father, from whom he receives goodness.

A comparison of Rufinus' translation with these external attestations of his source and parallels within Origen's works makes Rufinus' editorial hand evident in his version of *De principiis* 1.2.13. Notably absent from Rufinus' translation of Origen's discussion of the goodness of Father and Son is any notion of the sort of hierarchy that is present in Origen's comments on goodness in *ComJn* 13 and *ComMatt* 15. The absence of this hierarchy, I argue, is the product of the sort of concern Rufinus expressed in his preface to the translation. Although the degree of the Father's superiority to the Son seems to have been variable in Origen's articulation of this hierarchy, the superiority itself is a stable element, often expressed with the verb ὑπερέχω and its variants. In Origen's depictions of this hierarchy, the verb ὑπερέχω suggests that something on a higher level "rises above" those on a lower level; and this would seem to imply that there is some sort of distance that separates them. Thus, when Rufinus denies that there is any *distantia* between the goodness of the Father and the Son, it is probable that he is denying the implications of the hierarchical framework in which Origen elsewhere discusses goodness.

At the end of the passage in Rufinus' translation, Origen appears to make a hard divide between the Father, Son, Spirit, and created beings. He writes, "If then there are any other things called good in the scriptures, such as an angel, or a man, or a slave, or a treasure, or a good heart or a good tree, all these are so called by an inexact use of the word, since the goodness contained in them is accidental and not essential."[99] Goodness in created beings is accidental, writes Rufinus' Origen. The implication of this statement is that the goodness in the Son and Spirit is essential, even though it is drawn from the Father as source. This section in Rufinus' translation again seems to expunge the hierarchical structure of Origen's thought in which Son and Spirit functioned as intermediaries. Rufinus positions Son and Spirit firmly alongside the Father, while the passages from *ComJn* and *ComMatt* place them in positions in the middle, sometimes closer to the Father, sometimes closer to creatures.

His comment conflates the two passages. Nevertheless, the common theme between the texts is that the Son is below the Father in the hierarchy of beings.

99   Origen, *De principiis* 1.2.13 (trans. Butterworth, 28). *Iam uero si qua alia bona in scripturis dicuntur, uel angelus uel homo uel seruus uel thesaurus uel cor bonum uel arbor bona, haec omnia abusiue dicuntur, accidentem, non substantialem in se continentia bonitatem.* Latin from sc 252:142.

The fragments of Justinian and Jerome both suggest that there was a dissimilarity between the goodness in the Father and the Son. In Justinian's fragment, the Son εἰκὼν ἀγαθότητος θεοῦ ἐστιν, ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτοαγαθόν.[100] The Son may still be good, but he is not goodness itself. The presence of αὐτοαγαθόν in Justinian's fragment is especially noteworthy because a similar term, αὐτόθεος, appears in *ComJn* 2.17. There, Origen uses αὐτόθεος to refer to the Father and then states that all other things that are said to be θεός (among which Origen includes the Son) are made θεός by participation in divinity of αὐτόθεος. Divinity properly belongs to the Father, and other things are divine only insofar as they participate in the divinity of the Father. If we were to use the terms of Rufinus at the end of *De principiis* 1.2.13 to describe the theology of *ComJn* 2.17, we would say that the Father has divinity essentially; and all else (including the Son) has it accidentally. This, however, does not align with what Rufinus' translation says with regard to goodness. In his translation, goodness appears to be contained in Father, Son, and Spirit essentially. Compare Justinian's use to that of Numenius:

> For if the Second (Divinity) is good, not from itself but from the First, how then would it be possible that he (the First) is not good, if the latter derives his goodness from participation with the (other, the First), especially as the Second participates in him (the First) specially because he is Good? So Plato taught the sharply observant (auditor) by his statement, 'That the Good is One.' That this is so, Plato has expressed in different ways; for in the *Timaeus* (10) he used the popular manner of expression, and said that he was 'good;' but in his Republic (vii.14), he speaks of the 'Idea of the Good.' Thus the Good would also be the Idea of the Creator, because he appears to us good through participation in the First and Only. Just as one says, that men are formed according to the idea of Man, and cattle after the Idea of Cattle, and the horses, after the Idea of a Horse, so it is also probably with the Creator; for if the latter is good only because of his participation in the goodness of the First Good, then would the First Mind, as the Good-in-itself, be its Idea (or model).[101]

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100   Justinian, *Epistula ad Mennam*.

101   Numenius, *Fragments* 19–20 (trans. Numenius, *The Neoplatonic Writings of Numenius*, trans. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, Great Works of Philosophy Series, vol. 4 (Lawrence, Kans.: Selene Books, 1987), 34–36; Greek from Numenius, *Fragments*, ed. Édouard des Places, Collection des universités de France (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1973), 59–60): Εἰ γὰρ ἀγαθός ἐστιν ὁ δεύτερος οὐ παρ' ἑαυτοῦ, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ πρώτου, πῶς οἷόν τε ὑφ' οὗ μετουσίας ἐστὶν οὗτος ἀγαθός, μὴ ἀγαθὸν ⟨εἶναι⟩, ἄλλως τε κἂν τύχῃ αὐτοῦ ὡς ἀγαθοῦ μεταλαχὼν ὁ δεύτερος; οὕτω τοι ὁ Πλάτων ἐκ συλλογισμοῦ τῷ ὀξὺ βλέποντι ἀπέδωκε τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὅτι ἐστὶν ἕν. Ταῦτα δ' οὕτως ἔχοντα ἔθηκεν ὁ Πλάτων ἄλλῃ καὶ ἄλλῃ χωρίσας· ἰδίᾳ μὲν γὰρ τὸν κυκλικὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ

That Numenius uses αὐτοαγαθός to distinguish between the First and Second is particularly elucidating. It gives us a probable context within which to interpret Origen's use of αὐτο-X language.[102] For Numenius, the Second does not possess goodness on its own but rather through participation (μετουσία). He supplements this notion by using μεταλαγχάνω, which means something like possessing something because a share of it has been allotted by another. In the fragments where Numenius uses αὐτοαγαθός, two things are clear: (1) there is a hierarchy with the principal possessor (the First) of an attribute (αὐτο-X) at the top; and (2) that the Second possesses the attribute through reception of a share of what the principal possessor has. Although the Second is good, he does not possess goodness properly speaking, which is the sole prerogative of the First, ὁ αὐτοαγαθός.

The fact that Origen elsewhere uses αὐτο-X language to distinguish Father and Son (*ComJn* 2.17), coupled with the fact that we see a similar usage of it in Numenius, suggests that its appearance in Justinian's fragment is authentic. Furthermore, Justinian's fragment interprets the fact that the Son is not αὐτοαγαθός as suggesting that there is some sort of dissimilarity between the goodness of the Son and the goodness of the Father. The Son is an image of the goodness of the Father, "but not as the Father, good in a precisely similar way" (ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ἀπαραλλάκτως ἀγαθός).[103] If we combine Justinian's fragment, interpreted through the lens of Numenius, with Origen's other discussions of goodness, we are left with a stable schema. Origen consistently spoke about the goodness of the Father and Son by using some form of hierarchy. The Father, the proper possessor of goodness (ὁ αὐτοαγαθός), sat atop this hierarchy. The Son possessed the same goodness as the Father but through reception and, therefore, to a diminished degree.[104] Thus, as in the passages

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ἐγράψατο ἐν Τιμαίῳ εἰπών· Ἀγαθὸς ἦν· ἐν δὲ τῇ Πολιτείᾳ τὸ ἀγαθὸν εἶπεν 'ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέαν', ὡς δὴ τοῦ δημιουργοῦ ἰδέαν οὖσαν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὅστις πέφανται ἡμῖν ἀγαθὸς μετουσίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου τε καὶ μόνου. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι μὲν λέγονται τυπωθέντες ὑπὸ τῆς ἀνθρώπου ἰδέας, βόες δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς βοός, ἵπποι δ᾽ ὑπὸ τῆς ἵππου ἰδέας, οὕτως καὶ εἰκότως ὁ δημιουργὸς εἴπερ ἐστὶ μετουσίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθός, ⟨ἀγαθοῦ⟩ ἰδέα ἂν εἴη ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς, ὢν αὐτοάγαθον.

102   Note here that both Origen and his predecessor and teacher Clement were familiar with the work of Numenius and occasionally cited it favorably. See Clement *Strom.* 1.22.150; Origen, *Contra Celsum* 4.51. Both Clement and Origen mention Numenius shortly after discussing Aristobulus. For a thorough discussion of this fragment of Numenius and Origen's thought, see Gerhard Gruber, *ΖΩΗ: Wesen, Stufen und Mitteilung des wahren Lebens bei Origenes*, Münchener theologische Studien, 2, Systematische Abteilung 23 (München: Max Hueber, 1962), 112–116.

103   Justinian, *Epistula ad Mennam*.

104   Thus, Rufinus has not completely distorted Origen's thought. In all extant attestation, the Father is the source of goodness. Rufinus preserves this feature of Origen's thought. Fur-

from *ComJn* 13 and *ComMatt* 15, the Son was located somewhere in the hierarchy below the Father but above creatures.

Rufinus' translation of *De prin*. 1.2.13, which discusses the issue of the goodness of the Father and Son, contains vestiges of Origen's hierarchical teaching, which implied that there is some sort of dissimilarity or space between the Father and Son. The Son has goodness but not in the same way as the Father. Rufinus' Origen denies that there is any *dissimilitudo* or *distantia* between the goodness of the Father and Son. In *ComJn* 13.151–153, preserved in Greek, Origen argues that the Son "is not comparable to the Father in any way" (οὐ συγκρίνεται κατ' οὐδὲν τῷ πατρί). Immediately after this statement, Origen writes that the Son is an image of God's goodness. When Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* 1.2.13 is put alongside this passage from *ComJn* 13 and Justinian's fragment, one is left with the distinct impression that the denial of *dissimilitudo* or *distantia* is Rufinus' attempt to correct the distance or dissimilarity within Origen's hierarchical theology. Origen's assertion that the Father transcends the Son and that the Son is the image of God's goodness, but not the goodness itself, would surely have been considered unorthodox by Rufinus as he was translating *De principiis* at the close of the fourth century. All of the external evidence suggests that Rufinus was aware of the occurrence of passages he considered unorthodox in the text of Origen he had before him. As Görgemanns and Karpp note, he seems to have suppressed the problematic elements of Origen's thought in this passage.[105]

This examination of Rufinus' translation of *De principiis* 1.2.13 has demonstrated the ways in which Rufinus' editorial principles led him to modify Origen's texts. The fragment of Justinian and similar passages elsewhere in Origen's corpus suggest that Origen would have emphasized the transcendence of the Father over the Son in *De principiis* 1.2.13. Rufinus, in accordance with his assumptions about interpolations in *De adulteratione* and stated procedure in the *Preface*, has likely removed those characteristically Origenian elements that would have troubled his readers at the dawn of the fifth century. He has stripped Origen's theology of all but vestiges its characteristic hierarchical structure.

thermore, Rufinus also attests to the fact that Origen thought that the Father and Son had the same goodness. This, too, seems to be authentically Origenian, although he would want to stress that they had it in a dissimilar manner; and this is something that Rufinus explicitly sought to deny.

105   Origen, *Vier Bücher von den Prinzipien*, 155, n. 43.

4.2 Commentary on John *2.13–32*

Because of Rufinus' tendencies with regard Origen's Trinitarian theology, I do not mine passages from *De principiis* in this final vignette on Origen's articulation of the distinction between the Father and Son. Instead, I focus on *ComJn* 2.13–32, a passage that survives in Greek untouched by the editorial hand of Rufinus. This passage is one of the most important texts for understanding Origen's distinction of the Father and Son in his early works,[106] and it is all the more valuable because we can be fairly certain that Origen's opponents here are monarchians.[107] My goal in this final vignette is not to offer a complete reconstruction of Origen's early Trinitarian thought but to demonstrate that Origen, like Tertullian and Novatian, used a schema of subordination to safeguard the distinction of the Father and Son against his monarchian opponents. Because the passage I am considering is so long, I break it up into smaller sections and discuss them in succession.

At the beginning of this section, Origen examines the use of the definite article in the opening verse of the Gospel of John. His deliberation on this topic forms the foundation for his subsequent discussion:

> (13) John has used the articles in one place and omitted them in another very precisely, and not as though he did not understand the precision of the Greek language. In the case of the Word, he adds the article 'the,' but in the case of the noun 'God,' he inserts it in one place and omits it in another. (14) For he adds the article when the noun 'God' stands for

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106   Jean Danielou notes that "this passage expresses the very heart of Origen's vision of the Godhead." See his *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, trans. John Austin Baker, History of Early Christian Doctrine before the Council of Nicaea 2 (London: Longman & Todd, 1973), 382.

107   For the identification of Origen's opponents here as monarchians or modalists, see Daniélou, *Origen*, 253; Cécile Blanc, "Avant-Propos," in *Commentaire sur saint Jean*, Sources chrétiennes 120 (Paris: Cerf, 1966), 14; Daniélou, *Gospel Message and Hellenistic Culture*, 375–376; Jean-Noël Aletti, "D'une écriture à l'autre: Analyse structurale d'un passage d'Origène—Commentaire sur Jean, livre 2:13–21," *Recherches de science religieuse* 61, no. 1 (1973): 27; Antonio Orbe, "Orígenes y los Monarquianos," *Gregorianum* 72, no. 1 (1991): 42; Norbert Brox, "«Gott»: Mit und ohne Artikel: Origenes über Joh 1, 1," *Biblische Notizen*, no. 66 (1993): 32; Kannengiesser, "Écriture et théologie trinitaire d'Origène," 359–361; Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 97–99; Bruns, *Trinität und Kosmos*, 50–52. Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao notes the dual polemical context of monarchianism and adoptianism. See his *Monarquía y Trinidad: El concepto teológico "monarchia" en la controversia "monarquiana,"* Publicaciones de la Universidad Pontificia Comillas Madrid, Serie I: Estudios 62 (Madrid: UPCO, 1996), 319–320.

the uncreated cause of the universe, but he omits it when the Word is referred to as 'God.' And as '*the* God' and 'God' differ in these places, so, perhaps, '*the* Word' and 'Word' differ. (15) For as the God who is over all is '*the* God' and not simply 'God,' so the source of reason in each rational being is '*the* Word.' That reason which is in each rational being would not properly have the same designation as the first reason, and said to be '*the* Word.'[108]

Origen's comments on the use of the definite article here have a notable parallel in Philo, whose thoughts help to reveal the full import of Origen's passage. Philo comments on Genesis 31:13,

"I am the God who appeared to thee in the place of God" (Gen. xxxi. 13). Surely it is a good cause for boasting for a soul, that God deigns to show Himself to and converse with it. And do not fail to mark the language used, but carefully inquire whether there are two Gods; for we read "I am the God that appeared to thee," not "in my place" but "in the place of God," as though it were another's. What, then, are we to say? He that is truly God is One, but those that are improperly so called are more than one. Accordingly the holy word in the present instance has indicated Him Who is truly God by means of the articles saying "I am the God," while it omits the article when mentioning him who is improperly so called, saying "Who appeared to thee in the place" not "of the God," but simply "of God."[109]

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108   Origen, *ComJn* 2.13–15 (trans. FC 80:98). Πάνυ δὲ παρατετηρημένως καὶ οὐχ ὡς ἑλληνικὴν ἀκριβολογίαν οὐκ ἐπιστάμενος ὁ Ἰωάννης ὅπου μὲν τοῖς ἄρθροις ἐχρήσατο ὅπου δὲ ταῦτα ἀπεσιώπησεν, ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ λόγου προστιθεὶς τὸ "ὁ", ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θεὸς προσηγορίας ὅπου μὲν τιθεὶς ὅπου δὲ αἴρων. (14.) Τίθησιν μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἄρθρον, ὅτε ἡ "θεὸς" ὀνομασία ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀγενήτου τάσσεται τῶν ὅλων αἰτίου, σιωπᾷ δὲ αὐτό, ὅτε ὁ λόγος "θεὸς" ὀνομάζεται. Ὡς δὲ διαφέρει κατὰ τούτους τοὺς τόπους "ὁ θεὸς" καὶ "θεός", οὕτως μήποτε διαφέρῃ "ὁ λόγος" καὶ "λόγος". (15.) Ὃν τρόπον γὰρ ὁ ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸς "ὁ θεὸς" καὶ οὐχ ἁπλῶς "θεός", οὕτως ἡ πηγὴ τοῦ ἐν ἑκάστῳ τῶν λογικῶν λόγου "ὁ λόγος", τοῦ ἐν ἑκάστῳ λόγου οὐκ ἂν κυρίως ὁμοίως τῷ πρώτῳ ὀνομασθέντος καὶ λεχθέντος "ὁ λόγος". Greek from SC 120:214–216. Aletti, "D'une écriture à l'autre," offers a very close reading of the grammar of this passage, noting subtle shifts in Origen's schema throughout the passage.

109   Philo, *De somniis* 2.228–229 (Greek and trans. with my modifications from Philo, *Philo: On Flight and Finding; On the Change of Names; On Dreams*, trans. F.H. Colson and Whitaker, vol. 5, Loeb Classical Library 275 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), 416–419): 'ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ.' πάγκαλόν γε αὔχημα ψυχῇ, τὸ ἀξιοῦν θεὸν ἐπιφαίνεσθαι καὶ ἐνομιλεῖν αὐτῇ. μὴ παρέλθῃς δὲ τὸ εἰρημένον, ἀλλὰ ἀκριβῶς ἐξέτασον, εἰ τῷ ὄντι δύο

Both Philo and Origen argue that the article before the noun θεός distinguishes between the God and other gods.[110] For Origen, ὁ θεός refers to the "uncreated cause of the universe" (τοῦ ἀγενήτου τάσσεται τῶν ὅλων αἰτίου).[111] For Philo, the use of the article designates the one who is truly God (ἀληθείᾳ θεός). For both, the article represents the uniqueness of the one to whom it is applied.[112] Thus far, Origen has set up a means for distinguishing God and Word; but he has not traced its full implications.

In the next section, however, the reason for his attention to the articles as a means of distinction becomes clear. He continues,

(16) Many people who wish to be pious are troubled because they are afraid that they may proclaim two Gods and, for this reason, they fall into false and impious beliefs. They either deny that the individual nature of the Son is other than that of the Father (ἰδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς) by confessing him to be God whom they refer to as 'Son' in name at least, or they deny the divinity (θεότητα) of the Son and make his individual nature and essence as an individual (ἰδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν) to be different from the Father.[113]

εἰσὶ θεοί· λέγεται γὰρ ὅτι 'ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ὁ ὀφθείς σοι,' οὐκ ἐν τόπῳ ἐμῷ, ἀλλ' 'ἐν τόπῳ θεοῦ,' ὡς ἂν ἑτέρου. τί οὖν χρὴ λέγειν; ὁ μὲν ἀληθείᾳ θεὸς εἷς ἐστιν, οἱ δ' ἐν καταχρήσει λεγόμενοι πλείους. διὸ καὶ ὁ ἱερὸς λόγος ἐν τῷ παρόντι τὸν μὲν ἀληθείᾳ διὰ τοῦ ἄρθρου μεμήνυκεν εἰπών· 'ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεός,' τὸν δ' ἐν καταχρήσει χωρὶς ἄρθρου φάσκων· 'ὁ ὀφθείς σοι ἐν τόπῳ,' οὐ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ μόνον 'θεοῦ.'

110   Alan F. Segal's discusses this passage from Philo, although he does not remark on any possible connections with Origen: *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 25 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 260–266.

111   Aletti suggests that in the series of expressions in 2.13–15, the phrases that have the article are perhaps commenting on πηγή in 2.15. The articular nouns in the passage represent the source for any others that possess the quality ("D'une écriture à l'autre," 29–30).

112   See also Hans Georg Thümmel's brief discussion of this matter, in which he notes the common aim of Origen and Philo to protect the claim that there is only one God: Thümmel, ed., *Origenes' Johanneskommentar, Buch I–V*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 63 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 243.

113   Origen, *ComJn* 2.16 (trans. FC 80:98): Καὶ τὸ πολλοὺς φιλοθέους εἶναι εὐχομένους ταράσσον, εὐλαβουμένους δύο ἀναγορεῦσαι θεοὺς καὶ παρὰ τοῦτο περιπίπτοντας ψευδέσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι δόγμασιν, ἤτοι ἀρνουμένους ἰδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς ὁμολογοῦντας θεὸν εἶναι τὸν μέχρι ὀνόματος παρ' αὐτοῖς "υἱὸν" προσαγορευόμενον, ἢ ἀρνουμένους τὴν θεότητα τοῦ υἱοῦ τιθέντας δὲ αὐτοῦ τὴν ἰδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν τυγχάνουσαν ἑτέραν τοῦ πατρός. Greek from SC 120:220–222.

Origen has here described the key features of the monarchian controversy.[114] The first thing to notice is that those whom Origen is addressing are concerned to keep from becoming ditheists, from "proclaiming two gods." The monarchians were especially troubled by anything they perceived to be ditheism, and ditheism was the damning label they attached to the theology of their opponents.[115]

In their quest to avoid ditheism, Origen argues that his opponents often fall into two main errors: 1) "they deny that the individual nature of the Son is other than that of the Father" (ἰδιότητα υἱοῦ ἑτέραν παρὰ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς); 2) "they deny the divinity (θεότητα) of the Son and make his individual nature and essence as an individual (ἰδιότητα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν κατὰ περιγραφὴν) to be different from the Father."[116] Although Origen does not reproduce the exact terminology, this first "false and impious dogma" aligns well with the main contention of the monarchians—that the Father and Son are "one and the same."[117] The second "false and impious dogma" also appears to be a paraphrase, but it aligns well with psilanthropism.[118] In this error, Origen's opponents argue for the alterity of the Son; but they do so only because they have already denied his divinity. In their view, if they had admitted that the Son was divine, also admitting that

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114   Brox draws attention to the monarchian context of this passage and highlights that Origen's opponents here seemed concerned to protect monotheism ("«Gott»," 32). Bruns states, "The fact Origen calls the Father alone 'true God' shows that he wants to account for biblical monotheism" (*Trinität und Kosmos*, 51).

115   The charge of ditheism is made explicitly by Callistus, when he says, "δίθεοί ἐστε." See *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 9.12.16. For the critical edition, see Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, Patristische Texte und Studien 25 (New York; Berlin: W. De Gruyter, 1986). See also Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 3.1. Although we do not see the accusation of ditheism itself in *Contra Noetum*, Hippolytus and the "elders" he mentions seem to be reacting to the charge of ditheism in multiple places. See Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum* 1.7, 11.1, 14.2–3.

116   Thümmel uses Harnack's terminology and notes that the two errors are modalistic and dynamistic [monarchianism]. See Thümmel, *Origenes' Johanneskommentar, Buch I–V*, 243. Orbe notes that both errors stem from "the same fundamental premise: the absolute oneness of God (substantial and personal)" ("Orígenes y los Monarquianos," 42).

117   It appears as though Origen has paraphrased their positions and used one of his own key terms, ἰδιότητα. However, his claim that they denied that the Son is "other" (ἑτέραν) than the Father accords well with the extant testimony to monarchianism. As I suggested in the earlier chapters, early statements (like those in Justin's *Dialogue*) that the Son was "other" than the Father were a probable motivation for the monarchian positions.

118   Many scholars use "adoptionism" to refer to the position Origen describes here, but I think "psilanthropism" is a more apposite term. Origen says nothing here of the adoption of the Son or his indwelling by the Holy Spirit; he merely states that some deny his divinity.

the Son was other than the Father would have been tantamount to dividing the Godhead—to professing ditheism.

Origen's choice of vocabulary in *ComJn* 2.16 is noteworthy. He uses both ἰδιότητα and περιγραφήν to refer to the individuality of the Son, as distinguished from the Father. The term ἰδιότης does not appear in discussion of the Godhead in *Contra Noetum* or the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, the two earliest attestations to monarchianism extant in Greek.[119] Likewise, neither of those works contains a use of περιγράφω that approximates that of Origen's use of περιγραφῆς here or in *ComJn* 1.291–292.[120] He does not use ὑπόστασις at all in 2.13–20, where he is so concerned to articulate the distinction between the Father and Son.[121]

Perhaps even more interesting is the manner in which Origen uses the term οὐσία in *ComJn* 2.16. Recall that the first error of Origen's opponents was that they denied that the ἰδιότης of the Son was other than that of the Father, that they collapsed any distinction between the unique individualities of Father and the Son. The second error was that the Son's ἰδιότης and οὐσία κατὰ περιγραφήν were preserved only because the divinity of the Son was rejected. Origen's problem with the latter error appears to have been the denial of divinity to the Son. He is unconcerned with the fact that his opponents held that the οὐσία of the Son according to περιγραφήν was said to be ἑτέρα τοῦ πατρός. Origen seems comfortable with οὐσία being used to distinguish the Father and Son.[122] He does not even flinch at the suggestion that the οὐσία of the Son is ἑτέρα τοῦ πατρός.

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119   As I argue here, Origen's *ComJn* also attests to monarchianism; but *Contra Noetum* and the *Refutatio* focus on this doctrine much more than does Origen. The term ἰδιότης does appear once in *Refutatio* 7.20.4, but this is in the context of a discussion of the theology of Basilides. According to this passage, Basilides appears to use the term to talk about the particular characteristics of things designated by names; but he is not discussing the Godhead.

120   The term is used once in the *Refutatio*, but it is used to describe the process of writing the tenth book. Again, see Matthew R. Crawford's discussion of περιγραφή in his "The Triumph of Pro-Nicene Theology over Anti-Monarchian Exegesis: Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Heraclea on John 14:10–11," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21, no. 4 (2013): 549–555.

121   With this observation, I do not mean to suggest that ὑπόστασις was not an important term for Origen's formulation of the distinction between the Father and Son. I call attention to its absence here only to suggest that it was only one of a cluster of terms Origen used to describe the individuality or distinction of the Son and Father.

122   Compare Origen's usage here with that of Clement of Alexandria in *Excerpta ex Theodoto* 19. There, Clement uses περιγραφήν to talk about the distinction of the Son (or *Logos*), but he maintains that the Father and Son are not distinguished by οὐσία as Origen appears to allow here.

His lack of concern with the way οὐσία is used here is reflected in the fact that the term does not appear anymore in this section. That Origen has no problem with οὐσία being used as part of an expression of the Father-Son distinction here is further confirmed by a passage later in book 2 of *ComJn*. Origen writes,

> Now since the Savior here is 'light' in general, and in the catholic epistle of the same John, God is said to be light, one thinks it is confirmed from that source too that the Father is not distinct from the Son in essence. But another who has observed more accurately and speaks more soundly will say that the light which shines in the darkness and is not overcome by it, and the light in which there is no darkness at all are not the same.[123]

Origen's problem with the position in this passage is that it claims that the Father is not separate or distinct from the Son in οὐσία. It is clear that Origen would readily approve the opposite, namely, that the Father and Son are distinct in οὐσία, as acceptable doctrine. Origen, in fact, makes exactly this move in *De oratione*: "For if, as is demonstrated by other arguments, the Son is a being and subject distinct from the Father, it follows that prayer should be addressed to the Son and not to the Father, or to both, or to the Father alone."[124]

Simonetti supports this conclusion and observes that in addition to ὑπόστασις and ὑποκείμενον, Origen also uses οὐσία to distinguish the Father and Son.[125] Ilaria Ramelli claims that *ComJn* 2.149 supports her contention that Origen taught that the Father and Son "are the same in their essence or οὐσία ...."[126] Ramelli, however, has misread the passage. Origen puts the claim that the Father and Son (using light imagery) are not separated in οὐσία on the lips of those whom he is opposing. He clearly signifies this fact by introducing the statement with "someone thinks" (ὁ μέν τις οἴεται). Origen explicitly states that

123 Origen, *ComJn* 2.149 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:304–306): Ἐπεὶ δὲ "φῶς" ἁπαξαπλῶς ἐνταῦθα μὲν ὁ σωτήρ, ἐν δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννου ἐπιστολῇ λέγεται ὁ θεὸς εἶναι φῶς, ὁ μέν τις οἴεται καὶ ἐντεῦθεν κατασκευάζεσθαι τῇ οὐσίᾳ μὴ διεστηκέναι τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸν πατέρα· ὁ δέ τις ἀκριβέστερον τηρήσας, ὁ καὶ ὑγιέστερον λέγων, φήσει οὐ ταὐτὸν εἶναι τὸ φαῖνον ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φῶς καὶ μὴ καταλαμβανόμενον ὑπ' αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν ᾧ οὐδαμῶς ἐστι σκοτία.

124 Origen, *De oratione* 15.1: "εἰ γὰρ ἕτερος, ὡς ἐν ἄλλοις δείκνυται, κατ' οὐσίαν καὶ ὑποκείμενόν ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ πατρός, ἤτοι προσευκτέον τῷ υἱῷ οὐ τῷ πατρὶ ἢ ἀμφοτέροις ἢ τῷ πατρὶ μόνῳ." Greek from Origen, *Origenes Werke: Buch V–VIII Gegen Celsus; Die Schrift vom Gebet*, ed. Paul Koetschau, vol. 2, Griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte 3 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899), 334.

125 See Simonetti, "Note sulla teologia trinitaria di Origene," 273–274.

126 See her "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," *Harvard Theological Review* 105, no. 03 (2012): 304.

he prefers the opposite stance, that the Father and the Son are not the same. Ramelli goes on to assert that Origen here teaches that the Father and Son "are two different individuals, having different individual substances or ὑπο- στάσεις."[127] Apart from the fact that this assertion is built on a faulty premise concerning Origen's use of οὐσία in the passage, Ramelli's argument cannot stand. Ramelli wants to introduce a fine distinction between οὐσία and ὑπό- στασις in this passage, but the term ὑπόστασις does not occur here or in the immediately surrounding context (it occurs again in 2.156 but not in connec- tion with the relationship between the Father and Son). Origen might have catalyzed the development of these two key terms, but they had certainly not achieved any sort of stability when he was composing the first books of *ComJn*.

Origen's choice of vocabulary in this one small section which is extant in Greek is in particular contrast with Ramelli's thesis that Origen had a stable, advanced, and technical usage of οὐσία and ὑπόστασις that laid the foundation for the Nicene formulation. See, for example, her typical statement: "Origen himself had already maintained both things: that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit have the same οὐσία but are three different ὑποστάσεις .... As I set out to argue, Origen's thought represented a novel and fundamental theorization with respect to the communality of οὐσία and the individuality of ὑποστάσεις, conceived as individual substances, in the Trinity."[128]

After explaining the errors of those trying to avoid ditheism, Origen returns to his exegesis of John 1:1 in order to provide a solution to the problem the monarchians raised:

> (17) Their problem can be resolved in this way. We must say to them that at one time God, with the article, is very God (αὐτόθεος), wherefore also the Savior says in his prayer to the Father, 'That they may know you the only true God.' On the other hand, everything besides the very God, which is made God by participation in his divinity (πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεος μετοχῇ τῆς ἐκείνου θεότητος θεοποιούμενον), would be more properly not said to be '*the* God,' but 'God.' To be sure, his 'firstborn of every creature,' inasmuch as he was the first to be with God and has drawn divinity into

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127   Ibid. Ramelli displays the same sort of tendency in her treatment of the *Dialogue with Her- aclides*. She notes that the term ὑπόστασις is not present but then argues that the meaning is clear: "Although the key term ὑπόστασις does not pop up here—probably for the sake of simplicity and the lack of a philosophical context—Origen's conception of the two dis- tinct hypostases in one and the same divine nature is clear and extensively illustrated" (306).

128   See Ramelli, "Origen, Greek Philosophy, and the Birth of the Trinitarian Meaning of Hypostasis," 302–303.

himself (ἅτε πρῶτος τῷ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἶναι σπάσας τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτόν),
is more honored than the other gods beside him (of whom God is God
as it is said, 'The God of gods, the Lord has spoken, and he has called the
earth'). It was by his ministry that they became gods, for he drew from God
(ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά⟨μενος⟩) that they might be deified, sharing ungrudg-
ingly also with them according to his goodness. (18) *The* God, therefore, is
the true God. The others are gods formed according to him as images of
the prototype. But again, the archetypal image of the many images is *the*
Word with *the* God, who was 'in the beginning.' By being 'with *the* God'
he always continues to be 'God.' But he would not have this if he were not
with God, and he would not remain God if he did not continue in unceas-
ing contemplation of the depth of the Father (οὐκ ἂν δ' αὐτὸ ἐσχηκὼς εἰ
μὴ πρὸς θεὸν ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μείνας θεός, εἰ μὴ παρέμενε τῇ ἀδιαλείπτῳ θέᾳ τοῦ
πατρικοῦ βάθους).[129]

Origen begins by noting that God with the article, ὁ θεός, is "very God" (αὐτό-
θεος).[130] By quoting Jesus' prayer from John 17:3, Origen clarifies that the Father

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129 Origen, *ComJn* 2.17–18 (trans. FC 80:98–99): ἐντεῦθεν λύεσθαι δύναται. (17.) Λεκτέον γὰρ
     αὐτοῖς, ὅτι τότε μὲν αὐτόθεος ὁ θεός ἐστι, διόπερ καὶ ὁ σωτήρ φησιν ἐν τῇ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα εὐχῇ·
     "'Ἵνα γινώσκωσι σὲ τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεόν'· πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεος μετοχῇ τῆς ἐκείνου θεό-
     τητος θεοποιούμενον οὐχ "ὁ θεὸς" ἀλλὰ "θεὸς" κυριώτερον ἂν λέγοιτο, οὗ πάντως "ὁ πρωτότοκος
     πάσης κτίσεως", ἅτε πρῶτος τῷ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν εἶναι σπάσας τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτόν, ἐστὶ τιμιώ-
     τερος, τοῖς λοιποῖς παρ' αὐτὸν θεοῖς—ὧν ὁ θεὸς θεός ἐστι κατὰ τὸ λεγόμενον· "Θεὸς θεῶν κύριος
     ἐλάλησε, καὶ ἐκάλεσε τὴν γῆν"—διακονήσας τὸ γενέσθαι θεοῖς, ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά⟨μενος⟩ εἰς
     τὸ θεοποιηθῆναι αὐτούς, ἀφθόνως κἀκείνοις κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ χρηστότητα μεταδιδούς. (18.) Ἀλη-
     θινὸς οὖν θεὸς ὁ θεός, οἱ δὲ κατ' ἐκεῖνον μορφούμενοι θεοὶ ὡς εἰκόνες πρωτοτύπου· ἀλλὰ πάλιν τῶν
     πλειόνων εἰκόνων ἡ ἀρχέτυπος εἰκὼν ὁ πρὸς τὸν θεόν ἐστι λόγος, ὃς "ἐν ἀρχῇ" ἦν, τῷ εἶναι "πρὸς
     τὸν θεὸν" ἀεὶ μένων "θεός", οὐκ ἂν δ' αὐτὸ ἐσχηκὼς εἰ μὴ πρὸς θεὸν ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μείνας θεός, εἰ
     μὴ παρέμενε τῇ ἀδιαλείπτῳ θέᾳ τοῦ πατρικοῦ βάθους. Greek from SC 120:216–218.

130 Compare Origen's usage of αὐτόθεος here to Tertullian's usage of *ipsum deum*: "And so that
     they should not think they ought to stone him on the ground that he had wished himself to
     be taken for God himself, that is, the Father, because he had said, *I and the Father are one*,
     by way of showing that he is God, the Son of God, not by way of ⟨showing⟩ that he is God
     himself ...." Tertullian, *Adversus Praxean* 22.12 (trans. Evans, 164; Latin CCSL 2.2:1191): *et ne
     putarent ideo se illum lapidare debere, quasi se Deum ipsum, id est Patrem, uoluisset intel-
     legi quia dixerat: Ego et Pater unum sumus, qua Filium Dei Deum ostendens, non qua ipsum
     Deum ....* Tertullian here argues that the Father is *ipsum Deum*, while the Son is only *Deum*.
     Tertullian's usage here serves the same purpose as Origen's distinction between αὐτόθεος
     and θεός. Note also the similarity in Origen's usage here to that of Numenius in fragments
     19–20 (des Places) discussed above. In both cases, the αὐτο- prefix is used to distinguish
     the source from the recipient. Note also John Whittaker's discussions of αὐτο- prefixes used
     in contexts of self-generation. See his "The Historical Background of Proclus' Doctrine of
     the ΑΥΘΥΠΟΣΤΑΤΑ," in *De Jamblique à Proclus: Neuf exposés suivis de discussions*, ed. Bent

is αὐτόθεος, or the only true God (ἀληθινὸν θεόν).[131] The designation of the
Father as αὐτόθεος allows Origen to distinguish the Father from all of the other
theoi.[132]

Unlike the psilanthropists, Origen was not willing to secure the distinction of
the Father and Son by denying the divinity of the Son. In order to argue that the
Son was divine while still distinct from the Father, Origen invoked the frame-
work of participation.[133] Within this framework, all other divine beings (the
theoi) are divine only insofar as they participate in the divinity of the αὐτό-
θεος.[134] Origen then makes explicit that this notion of deity by participation
includes the "firstborn of every creature." He has "drawn divinity into himself"
(σπάσας τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτόν).[135] The implications of this statement are clear:
divinity (θεότης) properly belongs to the Father; and a share of it comes to the
Son from outside himself, that is, from the Father who is divinity itself. David
Balás observes that "as in the Platonic tradition, in Origen's works, too, partic-
ipation expresses the relationship of a lower degree within the hierarchy of

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Dalsgaard Larsen, Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique 21 (Vandœuvres-Genève: Fondation
Hardt, 1975), 193–237; idem, "Self-Generating Principles in Second-Century Gnostic Sys-
tems," in *The Rediscovery of Gnosticism: The School of Valentinus*, ed. Bentley Layton, vol. 1,
Studies in the History of Religions: Supplements to Numen 41 (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 176–
193. Origen never uses the sort of self-generation language that Whittaker discusses, but
his use of the αὐτο- prefixes is similar to that of Numenius.

131   The ἀληθινὸν θεόν language from John 17:3 is similar to that used by Philo. Philo separated
the highest God from the others by using "true God" language as well: ὁ μὲν ἀληθείᾳ θεὸς
εἷς ἐστιν (Philo, *De somniis*, 229). Note also Philo's discussion of *the* God and God in the
following sections. This passage in Philo provides a parallel to Origen's usage.

132   Recall my earlier discussion of the αὐτο-X language in Numenius and the fragment of Ori-
gen from Justian's *Epistula ad Mennam*.

133   David L. Balás has argued convincingly that the concept of participation is fundamental
for any analysis of Origen's thought. See his "The Idea of Participation in the Structure of
Origen's Thought. Christian Transposition of a Theme of the Platonic Tradition," in *Orige-
niana: Premier colloque international des études origéniennes, Montserrat, 18–21 Septembre
1973*, ed. Henri Crouzel, Gennaro Lomiento, and Josep Rius-Camps, Quaderni di "Vetera
Christianorum" 12 (Bari: Istituto di letteratura cristiana antica, Università di Bari, 1975),
257. René Cadiou also highlights the foundational role of the concept of participation
in Origen's thought. See his *Origen, His Life at Alexandria*, trans. John A. Southwell (St.
Louis, Mo.: Herder, 1944), 136. Note also the comment of Corsini, cited by Balás: "Il sub-
ordinazionismo, in particolare, sembra essere il frutto di quello che è, sostanzialmente, il
nucleo metafisico fondamentale della speculazione origeniana: l'idea di partecipazione."
Origen, *Commento al Vangelo di Giovanni*, ed. and trans. Eugenio Corsini, Classici della
filosofia 3 (Torino: Unione tipografico-editrice torinese, 1968), 41.

134   Both Philo and Origen note that only one is properly called God, although they do not use
the same vocabulary to do this.

135   He uses two verbs, σπάω and ἀρύω, to speak of the Son "drawing" divinity into himself.

beings to the higher."[136] The Son is divine but only because he participates in the divinity of the Father or draws it into himself.[137] His participation in the divnity of the Father necessarily entails him receiving or drawing it from the Father into himself. Only one is αὐτόθεος, and it is not the Son. Origen's use of αὐτό- language to establish distinction between the Father and Son is even more intriguing when considered alongside monarchian theological expressions. Consider Origen's usage in response to the following passage from *Contra Noetum*: "You see, brethren, how rash and reckless a doctrine they introduced in saying quite shamelessly, 'The Father is himself Christ; he is himself the Son; he himself was born, he himself suffered, he himself raised himself up!' "[138] Nevertheless, it is not inappropriate to call the Son θεός as long as he is distinguished from αὐτόθεος.

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136   Balás, "The Idea of Participation," 261. Balás' argument in this article is abbreviated because it is in a short conference paper. He offers a fuller discussion of the philosophical background of the idea of participation in the first chapter of his *Metousia Theou: Man's Participation in God's Perfections according to Saint Gregory of Nyssa*, Studia Anselmiana Philosophica Theologica 55 (Rome: I.B.C. Libreria Herder, 1966). There, he notes, "The idea of participation acquired true philosophical importance for the first time with Plato, who introduced the term μέθεξις primarily to express the relationship of the many individual and sensible instances to the one 'idea' or 'form'" (2). At p. 4 of the same work, he also notes that in the transition from middle- to neo-Platonism occurring around the time of Origen, "the notion of participation naturally [came] to express not only the relationship between the intelligible and sensible worlds, but also more generally the relation of any lower to any higher degree of reality."

137   Jules Lebreton argues that this passage is a good example of the sort of hierarchy with unequal degrees of divinity that he thinks is characteristic of Alexandrian theology. J. Lebreton, "Le désaccord de la foi populaire et de la théologie savante dans l'Église chrétienne du IIIe siècle (suite et fin)," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 20, no. 1 (1924): 15–16. He further notes that this sort of divine hierarchy shows "l'influence des spéculations philosophiques" (17). Lebreton locates the sources of this hierarchical tendency in what he considers to be an Alexandrian emphasis on the transcendence of God (16). Although I think Lebreton is correct in his assertion that (at least some) Alexandrian theologians had a hierarchical understanding of the Godhead, his assessment is part of a somewhat inexact characterization of different theologies. For example, Lebreton speaks of early theologians who only considered the persons of the Trinity "dans leurs relations avec le dogme du salut." That is, he wants to paint a picture of early theologians who were not influenced by philosophy.

138   Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, 3.2 (Greek and trans. Hippolytus, *Contra Noetum*, ed. Robert Butterworth, Heythrop Monographs 2 [London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977], 48): ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοί, πῶς προαλὲς καὶ τολμηρὸν δόγμα παρεισήνεγκαν ἀναισχύντως λέγοντες, Αὐτός ἐστι Χριστὸς ὁ Πατήρ, αὐτὸς Υἱός, αὐτὸς ἐγεννήθη, αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν, αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἤγειρεν! The Noetians used αὐτός frequently to identify the Father and the Son, but Origen's usage turns it to the opposite purpose.

When *ComJn* 2.13–32 is viewed alongside other passages where Origen employs a hierarchical scheme (such as *ComJn* 13.151–153 and *ComMatt* 15.10 discussed above), it becomes clear that Origen has classed the Son below the Father in terms of divinity.[139] He places the Son among the other *theoi*, who also receive divinity through participation in the Father. Origen is aware that his classification of the Son with the other *theoi* might be troubling for some, and he quickly moves to reassert the preeminence of the Son. The Son, he writes, "is more honored than the other gods beside him" (ἐστὶ τιμιώτερος, τοῖς λοιποῖς παρ᾽ αὐτὸν θεοῖς). Although the other *theoi* receive divinity by participation like the Son, they only receive it through the mediation of the Son. "It was by his ministry that they became gods, for he drew from God (ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀρυσά⟨μενος⟩) that they might be deified, sharing ungrudgingly also with them according to his goodness."[140] In this schema, then, the Son participates directly in the divinity of the Father; and the other *theoi* participate indirectly through the Son. For this reason, the Son outranks them even though he, too, receives divinity. Origen further stresses the mediatorial function of the Son as he argues that the Son is the archetypal image upon whom the other images are based.

There are some interesting similarities here with the work of Novatian. Recall that Novatian had argued that the Spirit is inferior to the Son because the Spirit receives from the Son. He also applied the same logic to the Son's relationship to the Father. Origen's schema of participation implies the same sort of relationship between the source and receiver, although he never expresses it as bluntly as Novatian. I argue that he is less blunt and explicit than Novatian here because other notions are doing the work of describing the relationship between the Father and Son. First, Origen uses his exegesis of the definite article in John 1:1 to establish that the Son receives divinity from the Father. Second,

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139   It is difficult to find the proper word to describe Origen's view of the relationship between the Father and Son in *ComJn* 2.13–32. He does not express this relationship with a single word that can easily be translated, but alternative descriptors are inelegant. Since Origen refers to the Father as source (πηγή), we could say that the Son is "downstream" from the Father when it comes to divinity. Such a description, while somewhat awkward, has the virtue of emphasizing, as does Origen, that the Son receives divinity from a source. He is not himself the source of divinity.

140   Note the striking structural similarity between Origen's scheme here and that in *ComMatt* 15, where he writes, "Considered in relation to the Father, the Son is the image of the Father's goodness; considered in relation to other beings, he is to them what the Father's goodness is to him" (translation from Daniélou, *Origen*, trans. Mitchell, 255). In each passage, the Father is the ultimate source (be it of divinity or goodness); and the Son serves as the intermediary through whom other beings receive a share of it.

this exegesis occurs within a typically Origenian hierarchical structure that pre-supposes the inferiority of things that are "downstream" from the source. He did not need to explicitly say that the Son was inferior to the Father because the whole framework in which he was discussing the Son (or *Logos* here) pre-supposed it.

Origen ends this section in a manner that suggests how firmly he situates the Son within the participatory framework. He writes of the Son, "By being 'with *the* God' he always continues to be 'God.' But he would not have this if he were not with God, and he would not remain God if he did not continue in unceasing contemplation of the depth of the Father" (οὐκ ἂν δ' αὐτὸ ἐσχηκὼς εἰ μὴ πρὸς θεὸν ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν μείνας θεός, εἰ μὴ παρέμενε τῇ ἀδιαλείπτῳ θέᾳ τοῦ πατρι-κοῦ βάθους). Here the logic of participation is made clear: one possesses that in which one participates only so long as one continues in participation. Because divinity is received by the Son from a source outside of himself, argues Origen, he would cease to be God if he stopped being with the only true God, who is the Father. The "being-with" of John 1:1 (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) Origen thus interprets within his framework of participation.[141] Furthermore, divinity can be possessed in degrees depending on how perfectly one participates.[142] The Son is more hon-

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141   In light of the participated nature of the Son's divinity, I think Crouzel misses the mark when he writes: "Bien que le Fils et l'Esprit aient reçu tout ce qu'ils ont du Père, origine de la divinité et de l'univers, ils le possèdent comme leur bien propre et parfaitement, sans possibilité de croissance ou de diminution" (Although the Son and the Spirit have received all that they are from the Father, who is the origin of the deity and of the universe, they pos-sess it as their own and perfectly, without the possibility of increase or decrease). See his, *Origène* (Paris; Namur: Lethielleux; Culture et vérité, 1985), 237 (trans. *Origen*, 181). Origen does seem to think that the Son will always remain God, but Crouzel does not specify what he means when he says "they possess it as their own and perfectly." In the passage I am considering, Origen stresses the opposite: the Father is αὐτόθεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεός, not the Son. If Origen maintained, as Crouzel contends, that the Son and Spirit possessed as their own and perfectly what they received, we would expect him to say something like the Son is ἀληθινὸς θεὸς or even κυρίως θεός, but he does not. There is a tension in Origen's thought that Crouzel side-steps too easily. On the one hand, the Son always remains God (ἀεὶ μένων "θεός") because he is "πρὸς τὸν θεὸν" and has been since the beginning. On the other hand, everything except ὁ αὐτόθεος is made God (θεοποιούμενον) by participation through recep-tion. The tension lies in the fact that Origen seems to be bending philosophy's schema so that he can account for the Christian faith. Normally, a trait that is possessed by participa-tion can be lost; but Origen claims that this is not the case with regard to Jesus' possession of divinity by participation.

142   Balás describes Origen's use of participation well: "Common to all applications seems to be that it expresses a relationship of a 'lower level' of being, which possesses a certain perfec-tion in a derived, dependent manner to a 'higher level' of being, which possesses the same perfection fully, and is the source of it for others." See Balás, "The Idea of Participation," 270. Balás later suggests that within the Trinity, "though the aspects of receiving and of

ored than the other *theoi* because of the supremely exemplary nature of his participation.[143]

Origen is aware that even though he has safeguarded the uniqueness of the Father by calling him αὐτόθεος, some will still suspect that he has failed to maintain the traditional monotheistic assertion that there is only one God. He continues,

> (19) Some, however, have probably taken offense at what we said when we described the Father as the true God but, in addition to the true God (ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ), said many gods have come into existence by participation in *the* God (θεῶν πλειόνων τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ γινομένων). These people might fear that the glory of the one who transcends all creation is put on a level with the others who happen to have the title 'god.' Because of this we must set for this explanation in addition to the difference which has already been explained in relation to which we declared that God the Word is the minister of deity (θεότητος) to all the other Gods. (20) The reason which is in each rational being has the same position in relation

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personal communion are fully present, the character of an accidental, losable, decreasing or growing possession is explicitly excluded by Origen, as is also the notion of a temporal beginning." (271) Balás' argument here is unconvincing. He seems eager to avoid what he thinks are the negative side effects of participation within the Trinity. He produces as evidence for his claim *ComJn* 2.124, where Origen claims that rational beings do not possess blessedness as an inseparable attribute (ἀχώριστον συμβεβηκὸς τὴν μακαριότητα). This passage, however, is not directly addressing the members of the Trinity. Even more, a passage like *ComJn* 2.76 seems to problematize his claim. There, Origen writes, "The Holy Spirit seems to have need of the Son ministering to his hypostasis, not only for it to exist, but also for it to be wise, and rational, and just, and whatever other thing we ought to understand it to be by participation in the aspects of Christ which we mentioned previously" (trans. FC 80:114): "οὗ χρῄζειν ἔοικε τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα διακονοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῇ ὑποστάσει, οὐ μόνον εἰς τὸ εἶναι ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφὸν εἶναι καὶ λογικὸν καὶ δίκαιον καὶ πᾶν ὁτιποτοῦν χρὴ αὐτὸ νοεῖν τυγχάνειν κατὰ μετοχὴν τῶν προειρημένων ἡμῖν Χριστοῦ ἐπινοιῶν" (Greek from SC 120:256). If the Holy Spirit has to participate in the Son even to exist, it is difficult to see how Balás can support his claim that what is received in the Trinity is not accidental—at least in the case of the Holy Spirit.

143   Joseph Trigg expresses the full import of this passage well: "Origen, although he insisted on Christ's divinity and utter difference from all lesser beings, was unwilling to ascribe to the Son the same dignity he ascribed to the Father. The son as a mediating hypostasis is inferior to the Father and represents a lower stage in the cosmological scale. Only the Father, Origen said, is truly God; the Son is God only by participation in the Father. He found in the opening verse of the Gospel of John a grammatical construction that confirmed his evaluation of the Son's lesser divinity." See Joseph Wilson Trigg, *Origen: The Bible and Philosophy in the Third-Century Church* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 98–99.

to the Word which is in the beginning with God, which is God the Word, which God the Word has with God. For as the Father is very God and true God (ὡς γὰρ αὐτόθεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ) in relation to the image and images of the image (wherefore also men are said to be 'according to the image,' not 'images'), so is the very Word (ὁ αὐτόλογος) in relation to the reason in each one. For both hold the place of a source; the Father, that of divinity, the Son, that of reason (Ἀμφότερα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν, ὁ μὲν πατὴρ θεότητος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς λόγου).[144]

The potential fear that Origen describes is precisely the sort of thing that would have troubled the monarchians. The application of the title "God" to more than one being opens one to the monarchian critique of ditheism or polytheism. Origen's emphasis on the title "God" here signals that the application of this title was problematic for the monarchians unless the Son was identified with the Father. Origen reiterates that even though they are called *theoi*, they are not placed in the same position as the true God with regard to divinity, for the true God transcends all else.[145] The other *theoi* are downstream from the source (πηγή), as it were; and they are one step further removed from the source because divinity is mediated to them by the Word, who is the minister of deity (διάκονον τῆς θεότητος).

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144   Origen, *ComJn* 2.19–20 (FC 80:99–100). (19.) Ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ εἰκὸς προσκόψειν τινὰς τοῖς εἰρημένοις, ἑνὸς μὲν ἀληθινοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀπαγγελλομένου παρὰ δὲ τὸν ἀληθινὸν θεὸν θεῶν πλειόνων τῇ μετοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ γινομένων, εὐλαβουμένους τὴν τοῦ πᾶσαν κτίσιν ὑπερέχοντος δόξαν ἐξισῶσαι τοῖς λοιποῖς τῆς "θεὸς" προσηγορίας τυγχάνουσι, πρὸς τῇ ἀποδεδομένῃ διαφορᾷ, καθ' ἣν ἐφάσκομεν πᾶσι τοῖς λοιποῖς θεοῖς διάκονον εἶναι τῆς θεότητος τὸν θεὸν λόγον, καὶ ταύτην παραστατέον. (20.) Ὁ γὰρ ἐν ἑκάστῳ λόγος τῶν λογικῶν τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ἔχει πρὸς τὸν ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγον πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ὄντα λόγον θεόν, ὃν ὁ θεὸς λόγος πρὸς τὸν θεόν· ὡς γὰρ αὐτόθεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς ὁ πατὴρ πρὸς εἰκόνα καὶ εἰκόνας τῆς εἰκόνος,—διὸ καὶ "κατ' εἰκόνα" λέγονται εἶναι οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὐκ "εἰκόνες"—οὕτως ὁ αὐτόλογος πρὸς τὸν ἐν ἑκάστῳ λόγον. Ἀμφότερα γὰρ πηγῆς ἔχει χώραν, ὁ μὲν πατὴρ θεότητος, ὁ δὲ υἱὸς λόγου. Greek from SC 120:218–220.

145   Origen discusses differing degrees of participation in *De Prin.* 4.4.9. Creatures which participate in the same thing are said to share in the same nature as each other, even though they can possess the participated thing in different degrees. Origen writes, "Everyone who shares in anything is undoubtedly of one substance and one nature with him who shares in the same thing" (trans. Butterworth, 325–326; Latin from GCS 22:361): *Omnis, qui participat alicuius, cum eo, qui eiusdem rei particeps est, sine dubio unius substantiae est uniusque naturae.* Origen does not here spell out what this might mean for the Son's participation in the Father's divinity, perhaps because of Rufinian modifications; but Origen seems to have been able to speak about things being of the same nature while possessing something more or less fully. See also Crouzel's discussion of this passage from *De Prin.*: Henri Crouzel, *Théologie de l'image de Dieu chez Origène*, Théologie 34 (Paris: Aubier, 1956), 101–102.

After explaining the participatory schema with regard to divinity, Origen turns his attention to the way in which rational creatures participate in the *Logos*. In the same way that the Father is the source of divinity so, too, the Word (ὁ λόγος, ὁ αὐτόλογος) is the source of reason in all rational creatures.[146] Origen goes on to speak of degrees of participation in the *Logos*, noting that there can be "words of the second or third rank next to the Word who is before all things."[147] Just as there is a hierarchy of reason in those who participate in the *Logos* so, too, there must be a hierarchy of those *theoi* who have divinity through participation in the Father. The graded nature of this participatory framework of *logos* is reflected in the graded nature of the participatory framework of divinity since Origen himself says the two frameworks are similar.[148] Origen places the Son below the Father in the hierarchy of

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146   Aletti draws attention to a subtle shift in Origen's terminology here. Those beings which participate in the divinity of the Father are called *theoi*. Those beings which participate in the reason of the Word are called *logikoi*, not *logoi* ("D'une écriture à l'autre," 32). Commenting on *ComJn* 2.20, Aletti notes that "Origen insists not on the subordination of the Word, but on the fact that he is, like the Father, source" (Origène insiste non sur la subordination du Verbe, mais sur le fait qu'il est comme le Père, *source*). See ibid., 44. Aletti then concedes in a footnote that there is in this passage a "*subordination quant à l'origine*." Even after this concession, however, Aletti argues that nothing indicates that this is a "*subordination substantielle*." While Aletti's observation that nothing in this section suggests substantial subordination is technically correct, his comment reveals the imposition of foreign concerns on this passage, namely, the heightened polemical importance of questions regarding divine substance in the Nicene and post-Nicene contexts. Substance is of little interest to Origen in this passage; his main concerns are with divinity, reason, and the sources of each. Aletti appears concerned to rescue Origen from the charge of teaching the substantial or ontological subordination of the Son. Even if he is successful in this task, though, Origen can still be said to be teaching a subordination of divinity in the Son. Surely this is just as problematic from a post-Nicene perspective as teaching that the Son is ontologically subordinate to the Father. Aletti's tendency here is mirrored in the recent work of Bruns, which I discussed earlier. See especially *Trinität und Kosmos*, 22–23. It seems as though both Aletti and Bruns think that if they can prove that Origen did not teach the ontological subordination of the Son, they have proven that his theology is consonant with that of Nicaea. As this chapter has indicated, however, I find such approaches to be anachronistic.

147   Origen, *ComJn* 2.23 (trans. FC 80:100): λόγων δευτέρων ἢ τρίτων παρὰ τὸν πρὸ πάντων. Greek from SC 120:222.

148   Harnack also notes that Origen's notion of source implies a gradation within the Trinity: "But, as in Origen's sense the union of these only exists because the Father alone is the 'source of deity' (πηγὴ τῆς θεότητος) and principle of the other two hypostases, the Trinity is in truth no homogeneous one, but one which, in accordance with a 'subtle emanation idea', has degrees within it" (*History of Dogma*, trans. Neil Buchanan, vol. 2 [Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907], 358).

divine beings; yet, he is still above all of the other *theoi*. The Son, being reason itself (ὁ αὐτόλογος), sits atop the hierarchy of the *logikoi*. Although the Son must receive divinity from another, he himself is the source of all reason.

After what might be seen as a digression, Origen sums up the force of his preceding argument:

> There was "*the* God" and "God," then "gods" in two senses. "God the Word" transcends the higher order of these gods, himself being transcended by "*the* God" of the universe. And again, there was "*the* Word," and perhaps also "Word," comparable to "*the* God" and "God," and "the words" in two senses.[149]

Origen's discussion of the Father and Son here is similar to those passages discussed above where he speaks of the goodness of the Father and Son. In both *ComJn* 13 and *ComMatt* 15, Origen introduced a hierarchical framework wherein the Father transcended the Son and the Son transcended the rest of creatures. He does the same here, even using the same key term (ὑπερέχω) to describe this transcendence. Later, in a passage where he is considering the Son as "light," Origen makes a similar argument in even stronger terms, writing, "Now to the extent that God, the Father of truth, is more than, and greater than, the truth and, being the Father of wisdom, is greater than and surpasses wisdom, to this extent he transcends being 'true light.'"[150] Not only has Origen here used his characteristic term ὑπερέχω, he has also used the terms "more" (πλείων), "greater" (μείζων), and "better" (κρείττων) to describe the Father's transcendence of the Son. This passage comes shortly after Origen brings up a problem:

> Now since the Savior here [Jn 1:4] is "light" in general, and in the catholic epistle of the same John, God is said to be light [1Jn 1:5], one thinks it is confirmed from that source too that the Father is not distinct from the Son in essence. But another who has observed more accurately and speaks

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149   Origen, *ComJn* 2.32 (trans. FC 80:102; Greek SC 120:230–232): Ἦν γὰρ "ὁ θεὸς" καὶ "θεός", εἶτα "θεοὶ" διχῶς, ὧν τοῦ κρείττονος τάγματος ὑπερέχει ὁ "θεὸς λόγος" ὑπερεχόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ τῶν ὅλων "θεοῦ". Καὶ πάλιν ἦν "ὁ λόγος", τάχα δὲ καὶ "λόγος", ὁμοίως τῷ "ὁ θεὸς" καὶ "θεός", καὶ "οἱ λόγοι" διχῶς.

150   Origen, *ComJn* 2.151 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:310): ᾧ δὲ λόγῳ ὁ πατὴρ τῆς ἀληθείας θεὸς πλείων ἐστὶ καὶ μείζων ἢ ἀλήθεια καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ὢν σοφίας κρείττων ἐστὶ καὶ διαφέρων ἢ σοφία, τούτῳ ὑπερέχει τοῦ εἶναι "φῶς ἀληθινόν".

more soundly will say that the light which shines in the darkness and is
not overcome by it, and the light in which there is no darkness at all are
not the same.[151]

It is probable that the position Origen takes issue with in this passage is some
form of monarchianism. If Origen is addressing monarchians here, he would
seem to be opposing those who deny that the Father and Son are distinct in
οὐσία. In the accounts of monarchianism that I considered in part one, propo-
nents of monarchianism do not often use technical language like οὐσία.[152] A
bit later, Origen argues that because the Father is the Father of Wisdom, he is
"greater than and surpasses wisdom."[153] The verb Origen uses for "surpass" (δια-
φέρω) here carries the implication of differing from something else because it
excels the other thing. If this is the sense Origen intends for the verb here, it
clarifies his argument. Because the Father transcends and surpasses the Son,
they cannot be the same. Origen's hierarchical understanding of the universe,
with its concomitant subordinationism, pervades all of his thought; but he uti-
lizes it in this anti-monarchian context to prove that the Father and Son are not
the same.

   As the preceding analysis has demonstrated, Origen expressed a subordina-
tion of the Son to the Father in *ComJn* 2.13–32. The question of whether this is
an ontological subordination is a red herring. Origen focuses on divinity and
reason in this passage, not on *ousia* and *hypostasis*. The subordination of the
Son to the Father with regard to divinity is not an oversight or mistake, nor is it
a corner into which Origen is backed or a shoal he fails to avoid despite his best
efforts. Origen intentionally employs the framework of participation, with its
concomitant subordinationism, in order to refute monarchian assertions that
the Father and Son are one and the same. His distinction between ὁ θεός and
θεός and ὁ αὐτόθεος and θεοί allows him to affirm that the Son is God (θεός, but
not ὁ θεός) without the implication that he is the same as the Father. Origen,

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151   Origen, *ComJn* 2.149 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:308–310): Ἐπεὶ δὲ "φῶς" ἁπαξαπλῶς
      ἐνταῦθα μὲν ὁ σωτήρ, ἐν δὲ τῇ καθολικῇ τοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννου ἐπιστολῇ λέγεται ὁ θεὸς εἶναι φῶς, ὁ
      μέν τις οἴεται καὶ ἐντεῦθεν κατασκευάζεσθαι τῇ οὐσίᾳ μὴ διεστηκέναι τοῦ υἱοῦ τὸν πατέρα· ὁ δέ
      τις ἀκριβέστερον τηρήσας, ὁ καὶ ὑγιέστερον λέγων, φήσει οὐ ταὐτὸν εἶναι τὸ φαῖνον ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ
      φῶς καὶ μὴ καταλαμβανόμενον ὑπ' αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν ᾧ οὐδαμῶς ἐστι σκοτία.
152   They prefer to say things like the Father and Son are "one and the same" (ἓν καὶ ὁ αὐτός),
      but they do not specify one and the same "what." If this usage of οὐσία is an insertion of
      Origen, it does not necessarily help us to understand the intricacies of the position he was
      opposing. As I noted above, his usage of οὐσία is not fixed and consistent.
153   Origen, *ComJn* 2.151 (trans. FC 80:134; Greek SC 120:310): ὁ πατὴρ ὢν σοφίας κρείττων ἐστὶ καὶ
      διαφέρων ἢ σοφία.

like Tertullian and Novatian, argued that the derivative or received nature of the Son's divinity distinguished him from the Father, who alone properly and fully possessed divinity. With regard to divinity, the Son was downstream from the Father, the source from whom he drew it into himself.

Conclusion

This book rests on the methodological assumption that to understand Origen's Trinitarian theology properly, it is necessary to offer a detailed reading of that theology within its contemporary context in the early third century.[1] Any attempt to understand his theology requires a consciousness of the theological debates of Origen's time. Furthermore, the more detail we can provide about the theological positions Origen opposed or sought to correct, the better.[2]

Based on these methodological commitments, this book has focused on a small part of the vast corpus of Origen's work: *ComJn* 1–2. In an evocative passage from these two books, *ComJn* 2.13–32, Origen gives an account of the relationships among the Father, Son, and the rest of creation that functions as a corrective to what he views as a pious but misguided theology: monarchianism. A methodologically sound reading of this passage requires as detailed an account of monarchianism as we can provide. Prior to my work in this book, however, such a focused attempt to understand monarchian theology did not yet exist in English-language literature.[3]

The first part of this book was an attempt to provide a thorough and fulsome account of monarchianism as a theological movement. There are no surviving works of monarchian theology from the early third century, so any reconstruction relies on second-hand and often hostile witnesses to this understudied theological movement. Using the available sources, I offered an account of monarchianism that demonstrates that it had a stable core of theological commitments and development during the brief period of time I study. The monarchians shared with other streams of Christianity two non-negotiable theological commitments: (1) there is only one God; and (2) Jesus (or the Son) is God. The tension produced by these two commitments led the monarchians to what I consider their characteristic conclusion that the Father and Son are "one and the same."[4] With this assertion that the Father and the Son were the same, the monarchians opposed distinction between the Father and the Son, which they viewed as imperiling the uniqueness of God.

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1   This book is not, then, interested in the *Nachleben* of Origen's thought in the Nicene and post-Nicene debate, as important and interesting as it may be.
2   Recall my note from the introduction that this book is a long-form version of what Michel R. Barnes calls a "dense reading," a term I define there.
3   Furthermore, the examinations of monarchianism that did exist were not focused on reconstructing the broad contours of it as a theological movement.
4   In the surviving accounts that we have, the monarchians do not make this statement more precise. They are not reported as saying, "The Father and the Son are one and the same X."

Monarchianism was popular at the beginning of the third century, probably because of its unabashed affirmation that Jesus was God and its staunch commitment to defending the uniqueness of God. Despite its popularity, monarchianism did not go unchallenged. Soon some notable theologians produced anti-monarchian treatises.

Part two of this book considered Origen alongside those other theologians who wrote against the monarchians. Origen likely wrote books one and two of *ComJn* at the height of the monarchian controversy, shortly after returning to Alexandria from Rome, the epicenter of the monarchian controversy. My reexamination of *ComJn* 1–2 alongside other anti-monarchian writers and against the backdrop of monarchian theology brings into stark relief some of the key features of Origen's Trinitarian theology. Both Origen and his contemporary anti-monarchian counterparts shared the two core theological commitments of the monarchians; they too wanted to affirm both that there is only one God and that Jesus is God. They could not, however, accept the conclusion that this meant that the Father and the Son were "one and the same." Therefore, they had to articulate theologies in such a way that allowed them to affirm that Jesus is God, that there is only one God, and that the Father and Son are in some meaningful way distinct.[5]

This is precisely what Origen attempts to do in *ComJn* 1–2. In *ComJn* 1, he develops and emphasizes a Wisdom Christology so that he can argue that the Son, as Wisdom, was a distinct agent or actor alongside the Father "from the beginning."[6] Where one would expect him to devote all of his attention to the occurrence of *Logos* in John 1:1, we instead see him turn his focus to Wisdom as an important title for the Son. Furthermore, Origen's emphasis on the Son as Wisdom allows him to use scriptural texts like Proverbs 8:22 to argue that the Son was alongside the Father prior to creation.[7]

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5   See my brief summary of the key terms and means they used to describe the distinction of the Father and Son at the beginning of chapter five. Another way to define "distinct" in the context of the anti-monarchian writers is "not one and the same." Although these authors never use a phrase this unsubtle, this is what they need to prove. The anti-monarchian theologians must walk a tightrope and affirm that the Father and Son are one without allowing that they are "one and the same." For this reason, they cast about for various ways to distinguish the Father and Son without completely separating them.

6   I say "agent or actor" here because I do not think that Origen's vocabulary for speaking of different individuals had stabilized this early in his career.

7   As I argued in chapter four, the existence of the Son prior to creation is important for two reasons: (1) it places *another* alongside the Father prior to creation; (2) this *other* (the Son or *Logos* or Wisdom) has existence "from the beginning" or eternally. See, for example, *De prin.* 1.2.2 and *ComJn*, 2.9. The "two stage" *Logos* theologies would have been problematic

In the passage I consider at the greatest length, *ComJn* 2.13–32, Origen's response to the monarchian claims is even clearer, especially since he signals that he is responding to their theology in 2.16. In this passage, Origen argues that the Father is "the God" and that the Son is "God" by participation. He uses several devices to argue that the Father is truly God or "God himself." This emphasis allows him to demonstrate that he, too, believes that there is only one God. By claiming that the Son is God by participation, Origen is also able to affirm that the Son is God without claiming that they constitute a coordinated pair of two Gods. The framework of participation that Origen employs to make this argument leads him to claim that the Father transcends the Son, that the Father is greater than the Son. In their anti-monarchian writings, Tertullian and Novatian made similar arguments. Both argued that although the Son was God, he was somehow less than the Father. This allows them to say that the Son is not "the same as the Father," for something cannot be less than itself. Instead of emphasizing that the Son is less than the Father, Origen focuses on the transcendence of the Father over the Son. Origen's argument varies slightly from that of Novatian and Tertullian, but the result is the same. What is greater than something else cannot be the same as that which it is greater than.

Because of their contention that the Son is less than the Father, the theologies of Tertullian, Origen, and Novatian have been labelled as "subordinationist" by scholars at different points.[8] Scholars who label these theologies as "subordinationist" often imply or explicitly state that they are deficient. This negative evaluative judgment of early third-century "subordinationism" is based on an anachronistic imposition of post-Nicene definitions of Trinitarian orthodoxy onto these earlier authors. For Origen, as also for Tertullian and Novatian,[9] a subordinationist understanding of the Father and Son enabled a cogent response to the appeal of monarchianism.[10] Origen's subordinationism

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for Origen because they denied the individual existence of the Son before creation, thus conceding something to the monarchians.

8   Of course, the question of Origen's subordinationism is hotly debated; and some scholars, such as Ramelli, would disagree with my assessment.

9   Regarding Novatian's subordinationism, I agree with the broad conclusions of Daniel Lloyd's dissertation on Novatian's subordinationism. See his "Ontological Subordination in Novatian of Rome's Theology of the Son" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Marquette University, 2012).

10   I am not the first to argue that pre-Nicene subordinationism was not aberrant. Wolfgang Marcus argued this position in his *Der Subordinatianismus als historiologisches Phänomen: Ein Beitrag zu unserer Kenntnis von der Entstehung der altchristlichen "Theologie" und Kultur unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Begriffe Oikonomia und Theologia* (München: M. Hueber, 1963). While Marcus seeks to normalize pre-Nicene subordinationism, his account is directed at determining whether this pre-Nicene subordinationism should be

allowed him to argue that there is only one God, that the Son is God, and that the Son is not the same as the Father. This book enables an appreciation of the theological force and function of Origen's subordinationism by demonstrating how he intentionally utilized it to combat monarchian teaching.

considered some sort of "proto-Arianism." His account is more historically sensitive than most, but it is still drawn into the orbit of Nicene and post-Nicene debates. Daniel Lloyd's recent dissertation also sought to rehabilitate pre-Nicene subordinationism as a measured theological strategy.

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